



# St. Matthews, Kentucky Area History



## St. Matthews

**By Don C. Leahy, University of Louisville,  
English 101-B, Miss Lyons, May 1938**

This is one of many sections that contain information, photos, newspaper articles, internet items, etc. of the St. Matthews area. Many of the items came from Al Ring's personal collections but many people have helped and I have tried to give credit where I can.

The purpose of this "collection" was to create the history of St. Matthews, Kentucky. Being retired I now have time to do many of the things I have always wanted, this project is just one of them.

All graphics have been improved to make the resolution as good as possible, but the reader should remember that many came from copies of old newspaper articles and photos. Credit to the source of the photos, etc. is provided whenever it was available. We realize that many items are not identified and regret that we weren't able to provide this information. As far as the newspaper articles that are not identified, 99% of them would have to be from one of three possible sources. *The Courier-Journal*, *The Louisville Times* or one of the *Voice* publications. Books that we have used for some information include, *Randy*, *Cactus*, *Uncle, Ed and the Golden age of Louisville Television*, *Waggener High School Alumni Directory 1996*, *Waggener Traditional High School Alumni Directory 2007*, *Memories of Fontaine Ferry Park*, *St. Matthews The Crossroads of Beargrass* by Samuel W. Thomas, *St. Matthews, 25 Years a City Two Centuries a Community*, *St. Matthews 1960-1995*, *Waggener Lair's 1958 to 1962*, *The Holy Warrior*, *Muhammad Ali*, *Louisville's Own (An Illustrated Encyclopedia Of Louisville Area Recorded Pop Music From 1953 to 1983)*.

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**May 1938: NOTE** (This e-mail was sent to me (Al Ring) from Tom Owen, of the University of Louisville September 9, 2002. Tom was helping me find the source of the following pictures which were also used in this paper.)

Al: In the late 1930s and early 40s, U of L Freshmen enrollees in Elva Lyons' English 101 class were required to write a paper on a local topic, their street, neighborhood, social service institution, or parent's employment, etc.. In the late 40s, Professor Lyons in retirement in Ohio sorted her collection of Freshmen essays by general topic and returned them to U of L where they were bound.

Don C. Leahy wrote the paper you asked about in May, 1938. (It is included in Lyons' Volume 15: Crescent Hill and St. Matthews.) In an introduction, he notes that he had lived in St. Matthews his entire life (18 years.) His "bibliography" indicates that he got his information from "people" (he lists them), Hewitt Taylor's "Salubrious Suburbs," and from the Courier-Journal. Presumably, the news clippings from a series on "St. Matthews volunteers" came from one of the two published sources. In fact, the "Salubrious Suburbs" thing rings a faint bell somehow.

Professor Lyons noted that the student, Don Leahy, "died of a heart attack a year or two after this paper was written." The paper is 48 pages of faded typewritten text and brownish clippings. A loose sheet in faded hand dated 8/14/86 by Charles A. Staebler Jr. attempts to identify 7 St. Matthews citizens shown in a clipping watching a fire in progress. I wouldn't doubt if Staebler didn't make the photocopied excerpt in your possession.

Hope this helps. Tom Owen

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**Dedication:** The editor feels that it is entirely fitting that this paper, which the author did not dedicate, be dedicated to his memory, for the University of Louisville lost one of its outstanding student personalities in the death of Don C. Leahy of a heart attack a year or two after this paper was written.

**NOTE from Al Ring, January 2010:** Through Ancestry.com I was able to find this additional information about Donald "Don" Christopher Leahy. He was born in Louisville Kentucky July 18, 1909, to Thomas J and Bertha C. Rademaker Leahy. He died February 28, 1941 in Jefferson County and was married to Salome O. Leahy Leahy. The Leahy family lived at 3707 Lexington Road in the St. Matthews area. He had a brother Lawrence T and a sister Mary S. Leahy. Don graduated from Holy Trinity school, St. Xavier school and University of Louisville. St. Xavier Year book the Tiger. 1927



Sitting—E. Thiemann, D. Leahy, H. Logan, E. Mueller, P. Ryan.  
Standing—S. Huber, C. Ritman, J. Beisler, F. McDonough.

**Library Staff**



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**The Preface:** Just a word to the readers. I started out writing this article as the answer to just another class assignment. But as I asked questions here, looked up data there, and unearthed new (to me) and startling facts concerning the St. Matthews I had known for the better part of my life, I became interested, immensely so. The drab aspect of just an assignment soon lost its drabness, and what I was doing was no longer an assignment, but something I found myself wanting to do. I found that St. Matthews had a story to tell. She, in transition, is telling this story with a sincerity that is hard to evade. She has instilled into her story a vitalness that has demanded recognition for her.

If you readers become as interested in what is set before you, as I did in writing this,—then this article will not have been written in vain. D.C.L.

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**Introduction:** In this discussion of St. Matthews in transition, it is necessary that we come to some definite understanding as to just what St. Matthews comprises. Situated just one mile east of Louisville on the Shelbyville Pike, at the converging of five roads, the Shelbyville Pike (Frankfort Avenue), Lexington Road, Westport Road, Chenoweth Lane, and Breckinridge Lane, there is a closely grouped cluster of business stores. I could limit myself to the consideration of this Business Section of St. Matthews, that small, ever-growing and changing, compact mass of animation: inanimate and yet full of activity, compactly grouped along each side of Frankfort Avenue from St. Matthews Avenue on the East to the junction of Lexington Road and Frankfort Avenue on the West.

But St. Matthews stands for more than this, and in justice to others and to objects that otherwise would not be included, I think it better that we consider a vaster territory and more objects. So let us assume as our boundaries of St. Matthews an imaginary line running through Cannon Lane extending to Brownsboro Road and to the Taylorsville Road. Now let us pick up one straggly end of this fanciful line at Brownsboro Road just above the Crescent Hill Golf Course and run east with it to Indian Hills, then continue north to the River Road; now east to Limekiln Lane and south to Brownsboro Road. Come west here just a few paces and then head south once more through Herr's Lane to the Westport Road, now go left straight ahead to Warwick Villa Road, turn right here and continue south and east till the Shelbyville Road is reached. Here it is necessary to describe an arc. Using St. Matthews' Business Section as a center, and with a radius of three or four miles describe this arc in a south westerly direction till it crosses the Taylorsville Road. Having accomplished this, you will find that we are now just a little above Hikes Point. Now take our illusory thread and continue west until we have crossed the other straggly end of our unreal line drawn through Cannon Lane. This approximates the total boundaries of St. Matthews.

Some may contend that I haven't taken in enough territory. If we consider the route the R. F. D. mailman takes, I haven't. But what I have enclosed will satisfy our purpose.

We moved to St. Matthews eighteen years ago. About all we could see, at that time, was that St. Matthews was just one immense "commons", with just a few houses dotting, here and there, this vast expanse of soil just to break up the monotonous stretch of this land. St. Matthews, then, had one bank, one drug store, one automobile agency, one gasoline and oil station, one print shop, one pool room, a post office, a railroad depot, an Odd Fellow's Hall, the interurban car, the Produce Exchange, three home-owned grocery stores, two places at which to buy a drink, and no chain stores.

People came chiefly to live in and around The Point— as the spot where these five roads come together is known— because of the good gardening possibilities. Today, they move to St. Matthews because it is above High Water, and because Louisville is so easily

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accessible, and because they can have a country home with city convenience without paying city taxes.

### History of St. Matthews.

Because of the untold amount of history connected with St. Matthews, let us go back and delve into this history. St. Matthews was formerly known as Gilman's Point. And even today we have a Gilman Avenue in St. Matthews, and the voting section of St. Matthews, on the north side of the railroad tracks, is known as the North Gilman Precinct. The one on this side of the railroad tracks is known as the South Gilman Precinct. Dan Gilman came out of Louisville in 1840 to settle in the country. These same five roads came together then as they do now. Gilman decided that "The Point" was an ideal place for a tavern. This he built along with a general store, dispensing liquors on the side or vice versa. Thus it was that the settlement became known as The Point--Gilman's Point. Old timers referred to it simply as The Point.

Sometime after this an Episcopal Church was built and called St. Matthews. Along about 1854 when a post office was considered necessary, the good church-going-gentry decided that St. Matthews was a better name for the post office than Gilman's Point. So St. Matthews it was. As a result, in the course of time, the railroad station was also called St. Matthews. As a matter of fact except for the post office and the railroad station, the community was never St. Matthews or anything else, officially. It was never really incorporated. Although just recently incorporation was tried, it was fought so obstinately by the property owners that the town is still known as St. Matthews unincorporated.

Getting farther back, history tells us of the old Taylor house. It was quite a few years previous Gilman's settling at the coming together of the five roads, that Zachary Taylor was brought here by his family to live on a landed estate known as Springfield. This Springfield estate is back among the hills to the north east of the St. Matthews' business section. Zach was just twelve years old when he came to Kentucky to live. It was here that Zachary grew into manhood, to go away to wars, to come back a hero, and to become the twelfth President of the United States, only to die on July 9, 1850, and be brought back to St. Matthews, to be buried in the old Taylor Burial Ground, ten years after Gilman came to The Point. History refers to Taylor's burial as taking place at Springfield. This is confusing, and annually any number of tourists go to Springfield, Ky., to see his grave. The name of Springfield happened to be the name or nickname of the Taylor farm. It was so named because of the Zachary Taylor Farm, sitting back off of Blankenbaker Lane in St. Matthews.

After Gilman, came Henry Holtzheimer, Sr. to buy land and the Gilman store. Then the three Bauer Brothers, Louis, Henry, and John, purchased the store from Holtzheimer. There is a fourth Bauer brother, Albert, and while he also lives in St. Matthews today, he did not figure in the life of St. Matthews as much as the others, so we will let this mention of him suffice. The store (in part) is still in St. Matthews today, although vastly remodeled Louis and Henry are still living and play a big part in the life of St. Matthews. Albert is living, also, but his part in St. Matthews is negligible, and John died two years ago.

There were Arterburns and there were Rudy's. There is the old Rudy house, north of St. Matthews (when I use this expression this way I am simply referring to that part of St. Matthews known as the "main drag" or business section) on Rudy Lane. This house, built of stone to withstand the Indians and the elements, by first settler Jacob Rudy for his eldest son, Daniel, dates back in part to 1790. Then there were the Browns and Browns Lane. The Monahan's after the Browns. The Breckinridge's and the Chenoweth's. Old Dr. Chenoweth's Place on



*The old Chenoweth house, where the memory of a country doctor is revered.*



*Wildwood, built by James Brown after he came from Delaware in 1800. It has been occupied by several generations of the prominent Monahan family of bankers.*



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Chenoweth Lane is one of the oldest houses in the neighborhood, though oldest only in a small part of its structure. This house is now occupied by Alex Hayburn and Mrs. Hayburn, the granddaughter of Dr. Henry Chenoweth, who for sixty years was a resident of the place and an outstanding physician in Jefferson County. Then there is the Churchill Humphrey's place, which is built of brick made on the place by slave labor one hundred and thirty years ago. The slave quarters, the brick ovens or kilns, the molds used to shape the bricks are still intact.

James Brown came west and south from Delaware in 1800, to establish himself as a country gentleman on some thousand plus acres of land on what is now known as Browns Lane. Browns Lane where it crosses Beargrass Creek then was known as old "Dutch Station" and this is where Brown settled. Theodore Brown was a preacher. He had married twice and was the father of twenty children or so. So Brown, when Sunday came around, never found himself wanting an audience.

After the Browns came the Monahan's. Whether they purchased this land or whether they just "came in to it" is not definitely established. But the present Wildwood estate of Mrs. John Monohan is part of James Brown's original place at old "Dutch Station," as is the house although remodeled to some extent.

But possibly the earliest of all settlers around St. Matthews was General John Breckinridge of Revolutionary history, who acquired so much land in Jefferson County that early squatters on it, the story goes, remained for years undiscovered and unmolested. No material evidence is left of the Breckinridge place except the Breckinridge family grave plot and Breckinridge Lane.

Mixed in with these historical figures, heroes of our country, and good citizens, St. Matthews has another side, a tradition of cock fighting and horse racing. Some of the old-timers can bring forth from among their recollections vivid pictures of the cock fights that took place openly at first in the good old days, and then a little more secretly in the not-so-good old days. The last place of record where a cock fight was held was on Osa Lentz's place, "back Breckinridge Lane." It is easy to learn of these cock fights, but few of the citizen's memories go back to the time when the elite of Louisville would drive out to the neighboring St. Matthews estates to attend the races at the old Woodlawn Race Track. It was right after the Civil War that Woodlawn was in its prime. The Woodlawn Club house has been converted into a dwelling place and was long occupied by Norbourne Arterburn, but today this is on Sunny Acres owned by Dr. Roy Moore of Louisville. Some of the old stables are still erect and together on the Palmer place above St. Matthews. I was fortunate to go to school with the Palmer children so was able to get a little inside dope about post Civil War racing antics of which I was ignorant.

Having grown among these traditions, wherein gambling or wagering must necessarily have played a part, it is little wonder that today the people of St. Matthews are the "goll blamedest gamblenest" people in the world today. The people of St. Matthews will wager on anything—anything to get a bet up. They shoot dice, they play pool for money, they play cards, and they bet on high spade in a hard or cards at random. Constantly, day in and day out, throughout the year at Bauer's there are anywhere from three to five tables playing cards, involving anywhere from four to ten players per table. Figure if you can how much money changes hands? Then there is Gerstle's, and Chink's Pool Parlor. Besides, there are any number of private homes that run games.



*Slave quarters on the Churchill Humphrey estate.*



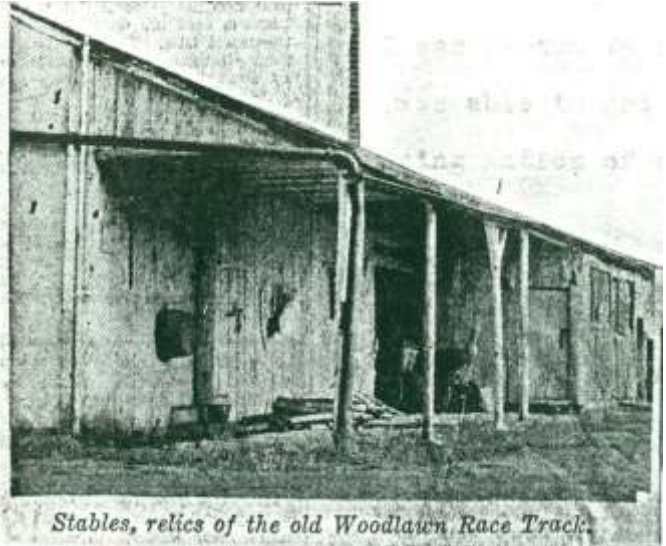
*Judge Churchill Humphrey's charming 130-year-old house.*



*The "main drag" in St. Matthews.*



*The 146-year-old Rudy house, where six generations of the family have lived.*



*Stables, relics of the old Woodlawn Race Track.*

Suppose for the sake of demonstration, you and I have entered Gerstle's place. Lined on both sides of the pool table there are twenty or thirty fellows. The dice have just been passed. The shooter coming up says, "Shoot two hundred bucks." The game—keeper takes and counts bets. "Twenty open," he says. "Here," from the end of the pool table. "Shoot," from the game—keep.

The shooter passes. He shoots the four hundred dollars; Passes; Shoots eight hundred; Gets faded; And Passes, Draws down six hundred dollars; Shoots a thousand; Is faded; Craps out! The dice once more are passed. Around and around the table go the dice. Who will win nobody knows. But they, the people of St. Matthews,—both young and old, mostly men however—continue gambling and wagering. Why, almost every business house, except the banks of St. Matthews, keeps books on the race horses.

When the stakes get low, and little money is changing hands they band together in cars and head across the river to the Greyhound. But the thing that has bothered me most is: Where do they get money like that to do like that with it? I have never been able to answer. This then will characteristic of the people of St. Matthews. I mean to convey by this that they constantly crave something they do not possess. There is unrest and turmoil; possibly, there is dissatisfaction with their earthly lot, and they figure that the obtaining of large sums of money in a hurry will put an end to all their longings. This may or may not have had much to do with the enormous growth of St. Matthews. I think it has. It can, no doubt, be traced back to the old cock fighting and earlier racing days of pioneer St. Matthews.

### **The Bauer's.**

It was in 1890 that the three Bauer Brothers, Louis, Henry, and John, came to St. Matthews and bought the store of stores from Henry Holzheimer Sr. The Bauer's continued to run the store and today it is one of the home owned groceries in St. Matthews. In conjunction with the grocery they also operate a saloon, so you see that even today their idea is not any different from the one advanced by old Dan Gilman. Holtzheimer went to farming exclusively. The store was not quite enough for the three brothers, so Louis started the St. Matthews Bank and Trust Co., — John, a paint shop, while Henry continued with the store. Louis is, today, the president of the St. Matthews Bank and Trust Co.; Henry still runs, the grocery, although aided by many of his younger relatives. John died in 1936.

The Bauer's are probably the most prolific people dwelling in St. Matthews today. Their sons, their nephews, nieces, cousins, and many other relations are into nearly everything the town undertakes.

For years, before the establishment of a Merchant Ice and Cold Storage Plant in St. Matthews, Bauer's used to go in winter-time (St. Matthews really had some winters then,) back to the pond behind the old Chenoweth Place (then occupied by the Wilkens of "Wilkens Family Whiskey" fame) and cut chunks of ice from the frozen surface. This they would store away, and used it to preserve their meats.

Then, too, there were possibly several red letter days in which the Bauer's played a leading part, possibly a red letter week. This was much different from the Red Letter Week as instituted by the chain stores, however. On these days the farmers for miles around would bring their hogs down to Bauer's for the Hog Killing Days. This congregated hog killing was a festival occasion in St. Matthews. It reminded one of a carnival. There was so much gaiety, and friendliness permeated in the air. All the farmers assisted in the killing, cleaning, cutting, and gutting the hogs. Then they would trade the meats to Bauer's for groceries, foodstuffs, and whatever other articles that they might want and could get from the Bauer Brothers store. Bauer's would furnish the beers and the other drinks, the sandwiches and the what nots, and a grand time was had by all. What was not taken back in foodstuffs and other merchandise, Bauer's made up in cash money. But everything was transacted to a nicety, all sides were pleased, what with Uncle Louie and Uncle Henry, as these two Bauer's are known, presiding in fire style.

About this time, there settled, along the Cannon Lane —Lexington Road part of our town, a man by the name of Dominic Zehnder. Dominic secured himself ninety-six acres of fertile sill, how, you will learn later. In addition to raising potatoes, he was raising a large family, and at the same time trying to organize a milk business. With all these endeavors he found himself ninety thousand dollars in

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debt. A little thing like this didn't faze him. He continued raising cows, and succeeded in getting his milk dairy started in an old shed on his farm. As his sons grew they took an interest in the business and developed it to such an extent that in 1921 they moved up into The Point into a substantial, one-floor-plan, modern-brick, milk dairy. They now, under the name of Zehnder Brothers Creamery, dispense milk to all sections of Louisville.

By the time his sons established the Dairy in its new quarters the old man had paid off his ninety-thousand dollar debt, and in 1927 he decided to quit raising potatoes, and sold his land for ninety six thousand dollars. He sold this land to a subdivision development company, and the land became known as Lexington Manor.

### The Produce Exchange.

With an ever growing influx of Switzers, Swiss, and Germans to St. Matthews just after the turn of the century, agriculture was taken up in a big way. The chief crop planted by these sturdy individuals was our famous Irish Cobbler. There was more and more land being tilled, and naturally, because of the existing two-crop season of potatoes, the first harvested right after the Fourth of July and the second in late September, more and more potatoes were grown.

Our hardy farmers were not getting the prices they should, nor were they getting the markets they should get. So, if they were to continue raising potatoes, on a scale that was definitely getting larger and larger as years passed, something must be done about this situation.

So in 1910 under the supervision of "Daddy" Hite and a group of progressive business men—The St. Matthews Produce Exchange was established. The primary purpose of this exchange was to enable the farmers to pool their potato crops; by so doing, they could realize better prices and better markets; as markets, due to quantity shipment, were made more accessible. This exchange prospered throughout the ensuing years—and as a result, so did the farmers, having several good years, then maybe a bad year, but on the whole enjoying an unusual amount of success. And although this potato raising and selling was only seasonal, these potatoes as shipped through there Produce Exchange became the Life Blood of the Oeschner's, Kaelin's, Kammer's, Bisig's, Nachand's, and Lausman's, and Westerman's among others.

In the year of its inaugural, the Exchange shipped exactly eighty-five carloads of potatoes. Each year since that initial year, shipping has increased so much, that in the years of 1923 through 1927 a climax shipment of one thousand carloads per year was attained. Now then just to get some idea of what that means – one thousand carloads doesn't sound as though that were so much – but take three hundred and thirty (that's how many sacks of potatoes go into each carload) and multiply that by a thousand and you'll get three hundred and thirty thousand sacks of potatoes. Now to go further, for every year from 1923 to 1927 that the Produce Exchange shipped one thousand carloads, the sacks contained one hundred pounds of potatoes, so by rapid calculation we find that some thirty three million pounds of potatoes were shipped every year that they shipped a thousand carloads. Mind you, this is the number of pounds shipped, this does not include the number of potatoes that were sold locally, nor does it take care of those that were kept for home use.

And while all of this was taking place there was a continuous increase in the influx of people – farmers – to St. Matthews – to plant, to grow, to harvest, and to sell some of these famous Irish Cobblers, from which others were piling up a tidy sum. While not as famous as some of our prominent gold rushes in history, nevertheless, the same idea holds in the case of St. Matthews multiplying her population two hundred fold in thirty years; it being one of those "Gold Is Where You Find It" cases. There is one difference, however, in the gold rushes, people went, some great distances, others short – they got what they wanted, or didn't, some stayed and others moved on. Here is St. Matthews, the people came to get land, to raise potatoes, to farm, and to make money. This they did, but having done so, they all stayed on. The gold rushes, generally, were of short duration. We admit some stayed after they got to the gold rush beds. But here, this was something that lasted for thirty odd years – when the crop, as it is now, started petering out – these farmers were established so why move on. Each year since 1929 the quantity, and due to the lack of foresightedness, the quality of the potatoes have been decreasing, till last year the Produce Exchange shipped only two hundred carloads.

The one important thing that attracted people to St. Matthews during this period of potato prosperity was the easy way of obtaining land. A farmer – say some of our Switzer friends – would come to St. Matthews, convince the banker that he could raise a good potato crop. This done, the banker would give him an option on some plot of land he had picked out. The farmer, then, would go to the Produce Exchange, get his fertilizer and his seed potatoes on credit – figured from the potential output of the potato crop he was to grow in proportion to the number of acres he figured utilizing.

Thus armed with his fertilizer and his seed potatoes, he would go back to his optioned land, plow (we have assumed he had a team and a plow, if he didn't have, he borrowed on from his neighbor) and fertilize his land, planted it, and then sat back and let his potatoes grow – cultivating them as they needed it – and let the rain do the rest. When time for harvest arrived, our farmer would dig or had his spuds dug, paying anywhere from ten to fifteen cents a barrel and up to thirty cents a barrel in good times. The he loaded them and carted them down to the Produce Exchange, where they were weighed, sorted, sacked, and shipped. The produce Exchange authorities then gave him a voucher for his total amount of potatoes. From his total amount of money coming due they subtracted the debt that he owed them for his seed potatoes and his fertilizer. And then our farmer friend would take part of what he had left go down to the bank and buy, out-right, the piece of land that the banker had optioned to him, and then use the remainder to build him a home on his newly acquired plot of ground. This our friends repeated year after year and as a result St. Matthews became the leading single shipping point of potatoes in the world from 1919 though 1929.

Good farmers though they were, our Swiss and German and Switzer friends failed to reckon with one item of importance – the proper rotation of crops and the scientific up building of the soil. As a result, either through ignorance or greed, the quality of the crops has diminished. This has lost to St. Matthews, temporarily perhaps, her place in the sun; she no longer enjoys the prestige of being the leading potato shipping market in the world. Like the old gray mare "She ain't what she used to be" and neither is the potato any longer that edible, mealy Irish Cobbler of earlier days; rather it has been displaced by a specky potato, full of black, hard or glassy spots, and we and our neighbors are naturally looking elsewhere for the quality potatoes we desire. This distinction of being the

world's leading shipping potato market has since 1929 been transferred to some place in Maine. Potato raising still continues in St. Matthews, however, as do other lines of farming but St. Matthews has definitely started looking to something else. This is the Suburbanite. But before we consider the suburbanite, which represents the last, -- the most recent stride is progress that our heroine has taken, let us consider a few side issues that might throw some light on this further advancement of St. Matthews.

### The Volunteer Fire Association.

In 1919, due to the increasing number of farm homes being erected on the optioned lands that are farmer's potato crops were enabling them to buy, a Volunteer Fire Association was established by the people of St. Matthews. This St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association was a community affair. Share one, share all; and all share alike. The establishing of this association and the purchasing of a one-ton Ford truck equipped as a chemical fire apparatus by this new organization caused the insurance rates of the home owners living in St. Matthews to be reduced. This reduction of rates per individual was much more than the percent assessed each inhabitant for the purchase of the apparatus, or you can bet your boots that they wouldn't have gotten the motorized chemical fire truck.

This association operated for two years on a helter-skelter, hit or miss basis. The first one to the garage, or the first one to know where the fire was, drove the fire truck. It was one of those old time Ford trucks capable, I think, of doing all of twenty miles an hour. Assuming that our apparatus got to the fire — and it did even though some one had to pull it — there was quite some confusion as to what everyone should do. So in 1921, Andrew Neichter, a mechanic working in Eline's Garage, which is right next to the garage that houses the fire truck, was appointed Fire Chief.

Let me say in passing, that here is really a firefighter. Neichter does not get paid for his services. He is no public hero — being disliked by more people in St. Matthews than liked. But he is a firefighter. In the densest of smoke, in the thickest of fires, he fights it and how! He acts as though crazy around a fire. He has been termed fool-hardy and declared not to have much sense. In case of a fire, or better to say when fighting a fire, he rushes in where angels — nay even devils, would fear to tread. He searches through the smoke for the source of the fire armed only with his hose, and somehow, miraculously, he finds it, and if it can be put right out, he puts it out. I have seen this individual dash into a smoking inferno with never a thought of safety — only the thought of getting to the fire and extinguishing it. He has been overcome by smoke, passed out, been taken to the hospital, seriously ill from lung burn from swallowing too much smoke or fire. But he comes back. And, Ladies and Gentlemen, remember he gets no pay for his job, he is still a mechanic at Eline's Garage. This is his only means of sustenance. Whether he fights fires with such gusto from a personal satisfaction or from some other reason, whether from the feeling of prestige or what? One will never know. He has been declared insane for his throwing-caution-to-the-wind-attitude. But insane or condemned, he fights fires and gets results. That's why Andy Neichter is still alive and still chief of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association.

In 1931 the old Ford truck was abandoned in favor of a super special Seagraves Pumper—a modern fire truck apparatus. This was made necessary by the ever increasing number of houses in St. Matthews. This also marks the beginning of the ending of our potato dynasty, and the continued arrival of the Suburbanite, although the first sally of these was made some years before. But more of this anon.

There is much more to the Volunteer Fire Association than just Neichter. Remember what was said for Neichter with regards to pay goes for the rest of the individuals connected with the Volunteers. The following will give you some idea about how this association functions: Should you live in St. Matthews and your house catch fire, you'd phone the Buschemeyer-Ogden Drug Store in St. Matthews. Your call might be answered by John Henry Ogden. He would quickly close a switch which would start the fire siren (on top of Eline's Garage) sounding. This serves to arouse the volunteer firemen. Neichter is most generally first to the garage, should it happen that he wouldn't be, he follows in his own car which he drives as fast, as fool-hardily, as insanely, other say, as he fight fires. I rather think that he is an expert chauffeur and an expert firefighter.



Chief Andrew W. Neichter poses beside the "fire Wagon" of the St. Matthews department. He has been a member of the volunteers since 1919, chief since 1921. None of the volunteers receive pay, the equipment being furnished by people of St. Matthews.



**ST. MATTHEWS Don C. Leahy, English 101-B, Miss Lyons, May 1938**

Captain Tommy Baker hurries from his house as the siren wails; Lieutenant Bud Young breaks all records getting into his boots and rubber coat to go to the fire; George Wurster, proprietor of the Wurster Hardware store, gets there just about as fast as his competitor in the same line, Freddie Wooten; and Irvin Bauer, butcher at Bauer Brothers, has no doubt been stopped in the middle of the act of cutting a round steak on more than one occasion by the sounding of the siren. These and others flock to the scene of the fire, the ones mentioned have the privilege of riding the fire truck, as have as more as can be accommodated. Others follow in their own cars to the scene of the fire and render what assistance they can. It's a great life if you like it. And who said you have to be in politics to be a fireman? These men get no pay. They are subject to call at all times. What's more, they go. Maybe it's that childish appeal to get near something burning that gets them up at three-thirty in the morning. Maybe it is from a higher aesthetic notion. Can you explain it? I think I can, but to do so would be to digress, and another digression in this article would be mortal. So suffice it that we have a good Volunteer Fire Association in St. Matthews, and let us move on to something else that has benefited St. Matthews no small amount.



Should you live in St. Matthews, suburb of Louisville and your house might get afire (and we wouldn't wish you any such hard luck) you'd phone the Buschemeyer-Ogden drug store, in St. Matthews. Your call might be answered by John Henry Ogden and he would quickly close a switch which would start the fire siren to rouse the volunteer firemen.



Very esthetic member of the firefighters is George Wurster, hardware proprietor. He rides on the front seat of the truck on every call.



**Captain Tommy Baker hurries down the steps of his home when he hears the siren, which usually draws six to ten volunteers to a blaze.**



**Although the picture doesn't look that way, Lieutenant Bud Young is really breaking records getting into his boots as a practice drill for a fire. The camera just stopped the motion too well.**



George Feierbend demonstrates how he can hustle into his firefighters coat to be ready for a blaze.



Irvin Bauer, St. Matthews merchant, has only to run across the street to be ready when the fire truck pulls out.



Fire fans are just as rabid in St. Matthews as elsewhere. This sideline group watched a recent fire in the suburb. The past year has seen two major fires in the town, one being Holy Trinity Church and the other an apartment house under construction. There had been no other large fires in many years.

Left to Right: Mike Clarkson, killed in Army Air Force in WWII, Phil Kline, son of DuPont Manual professor, Not Known, Jack Kline, brother of Phil and for years the Commander of the Marine Band in Washington, D.C., Lower boy with hat, unknown, James F. "Jimmy" Lord, Army Veteran of WWII, his father was Fred Lord, mother was Enos, grandfather Alex Staebler, grandmother, Idea Kuhn, great grandfather Joseph Staebler and great grandmothers Susannah Eck. (This is from hand written note by Charles A. Staebler, Jr.)

Zachary Taylor Cemetery

The establishment of Zachary Taylor's Monument and Grave Yard as a National Cemetery in 1926 was another momentous occasion in the annals of St. Matthews. While this does not have anything directly to do with the development of St. Matthews, it does bring yearly more tourists to St. Matthews than would otherwise come. They spend money here, they sing the praises of St. Matthews to others, and the very fact that they travel the roads in and around St. Matthews no doubt has been a determining factor in having the new U.S. Highway 42 come down the Brownsboro Road, right past the Cemetery. And this fact has helped no little with the obtaining of funds for the new Super Highway U.S. 60 which comes straight through the center of St. Matthews. And thus, indirectly, is St. Matthews benefited.

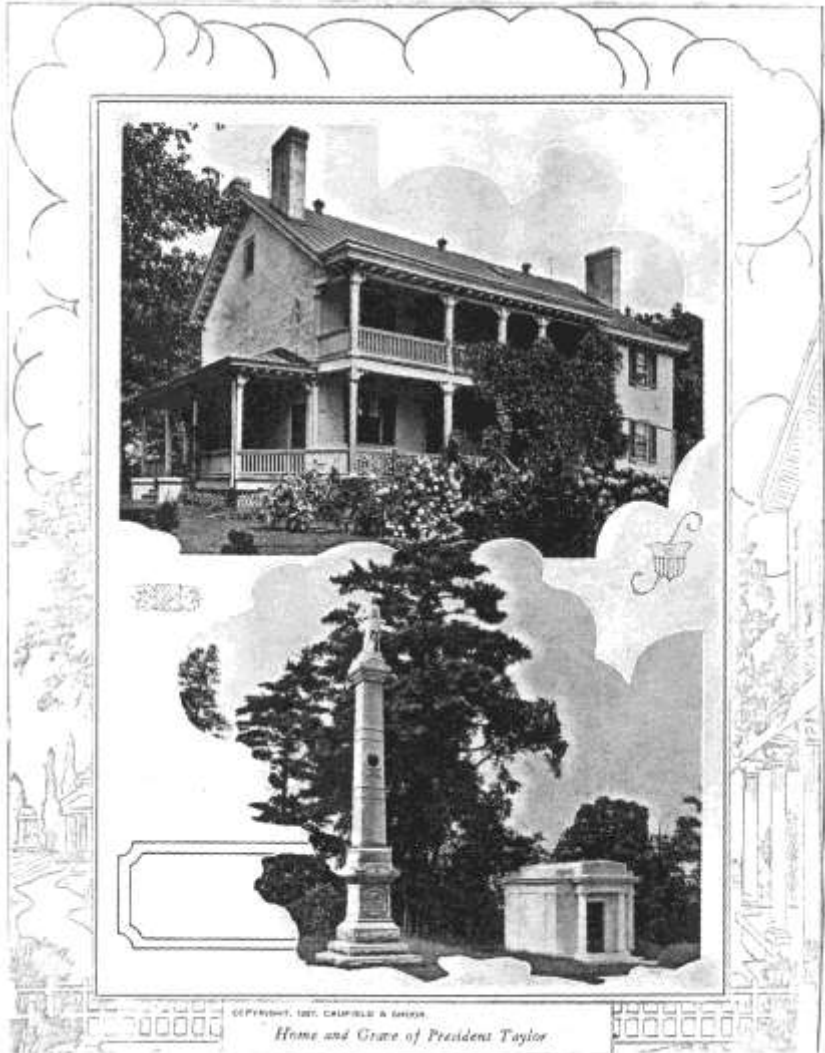
It was at the beginning of that period when everyone had become park conscious—National Park this — or, -- State park that — that, somewhere between the years of 1922 and \_\_\_\_\_ that comprised the old Taylor Burial Ground. Then the State, with the definite idea of obtaining for her famous son some National recognition, purchased eleven additional acres. The sixteen acres were, then presented to the National Government to do with as it saw fit; that is, of course, with reservation. The reservation being that Kentucky was pulling all the political strings it could possibly twang, so that Kentucky's gift would be used for a remembrance to Taylor. With the result that in 1926 the Taylor Burial Ground plus the eleven additional acres was opened as Zachary Taylor National Cemetery. The new Taylor Mausoleum was completed in this year, and the bodies of Zachary and his wife, Margaret Smith Taylor, were removed from the old tomb, which, also, is in the Cemetery just to the rear of the new tomb, and placed in the new.

Within the confines of this National Cemetery, which is laid out and kept very neatly, are the care taker's house, a pavilion, as for band concerts, but more appropriately used for the last rites or ceremonies before some one is buried there. Then there is the monument to Old Zach commemorating his victories in the Mexican War. The old tomb and the new. Twenty odd graves of the Taylor family, and two hundred and thirty nine graves of U.S. veterans. One might wonder, and justly so, who are eligible to be buried in this cemetery?

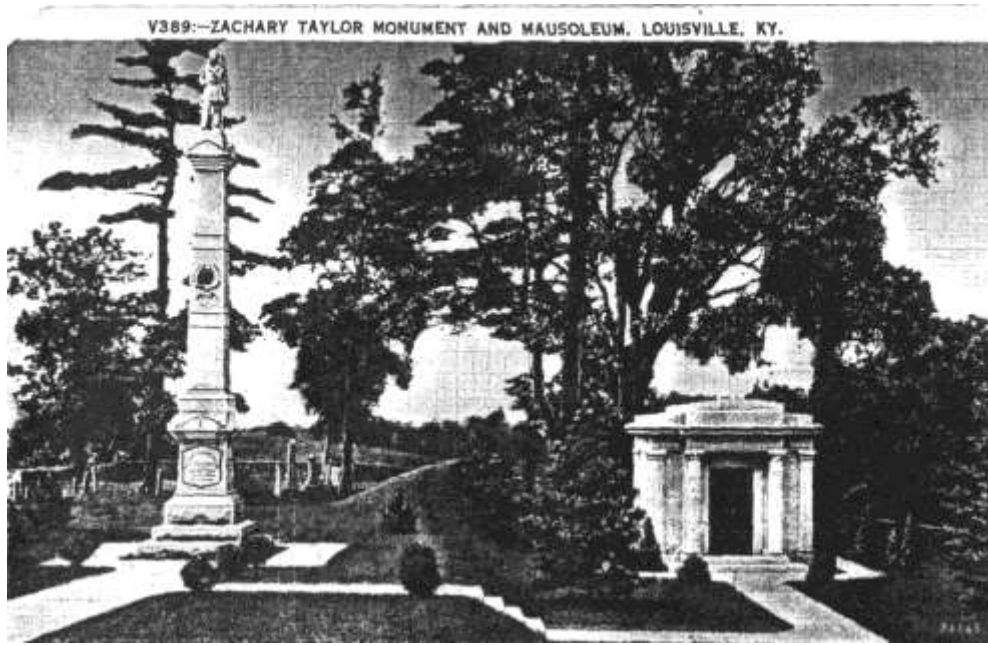
In addition to any of the relations of the Taylor family, who get buried in the original five-acre Taylor Burial Plot, the remaining eleven acres are to be used as a burial ground for any and all honorably discharged United States' Veterans — and their wives if they so choose. The Government buries all of its veterans, if they so desire to be buried along-side of their husbands.

This cemetery indeed shows the attention of the National Government. Every thing about it is spic and span. The buildings are all of modern stone construction, as is the wall surrounding it, although the back part of this wall is the old stone wall that has stood since Civil War days. The roads to, and inside, the National Cemetery Grounds are in excellent shape. The place is at present, has been for the past three years, in charge of Thomas P. Boston, Captain of U.S. Army, retired. If any of you care to drive out and see the place, and if you haven't you really should, Mr. Boston will gladly explain all that is necessary to make you familiar with Zachary Taylor. With so amicable a man in charge of such a place is it any wonder that tourists keep coming back to see this Monument to Taylor.

I have with the article a post card showing the new mausoleum, and the monument which was erected to Taylor for his unusual success in the Mexican Wars. It was erected in 1880 just thirty years after Taylor was buried here. The card also shows a few of the Taylor's graves, -- to the rear of the Monument. The latest of these, just recently added, are the grave of Judge and Mrs. Wallace of Louisville. The card does not show the two hundred and thirty nine white stone markers representing as many honorably discharged U.S. Veterans buried there.







**Recreational**

**Factors.**

The recreational factors of St. Matthews, while not directly helpful in St. Matthews transportation, have aided in keeping her many sons and daughters satisfied. For the wide scope of activities offered we must be thankful, chiefly, to the Catholic church for building and opening to public use a nice modern sixty by ninety gymnasium with better lighting facilities than any gymnasium in which I have had the pleasure to be. And I have been in gymnasia from Kentucky to Florida, from Florida to Texas, and back to Kentucky, and always with one discernable fault: poor lighting in the gymnasiums. Then too, thanks to the church for the use of the ten acre baseball park and playgrounds, which she has lent to the Zachary Taylor Post American Legion, under whose auspices softball is offered every night in the week to the public throughout the summer months; in the fall the Legion backs a football team; in winter, a basketball team. In addition, the Church has bought see-saws, a may-pole, and a mechanical foot-powered merry-go-round, and a sliding board. These are placed at points of vantage on her grounds and are open to the public. Catholic, Protestant, and Jew, all can use them, share and share alike.

Now I would like to offer a little sidelight into another spirit that is characteristic of the St. Matthews people, since I presented that gambling spirit. When the Catholic church and school burned last fall, that put things into quite a mess. The kids had no place to go to school. With the moving of the Church into our gym, the athletically inclined of St. Matthews would be without a place for sport. When across from Bethel way, came Reverend Scheer, Minister of Bethel Evangelical church, offering Father Beesinger of Holy Trinity Catholic Church the use of his Sunday School Classrooms in the Bethel Church for school rooms so that the kids could continue their classes. Needless to say, Father Beesinger accepted gladly. But that wasn't all. When Holy Trinity built the new gym I told you about, Bethel had sort of shelved hers, as though it were not necessary. The floor had buckled and warped. But faced with this near catastrophe, Bethel re-floored her gym and opened her basketball court to the use of all in St. Matthews. This then should give you another idea of the spirit that goes to make up the people of St. Matthews.

So then, to Bethel, and to Holy Trinity for furnishing facilities, and to the American Legion for running and operating, for assuming the cost, and to the people as a whole, blessed with kindred spirit, for their cooperation with the above organizations, must we be thankful.

### **The Suburbanite.**

The advent of the Suburbanite to St. Matthews was begun soon after Old Man Dominic Zehnder sold his farm to a subdivision corporation in 1927. This represented the first major subdivision movement in St. Matthews in years and in its movement was augmented by the sale of the Holtzheimers' seventy-one acres of land for two hundred and ten thousand dollars. This subdivision became known as Breckenridge Villa. New streets, Wendover, Wallace, Willis, Davies, Mayfair, Fairlawn, Iola, and many, many others, to numerous to name, grew up where nothing but potato patches were before.

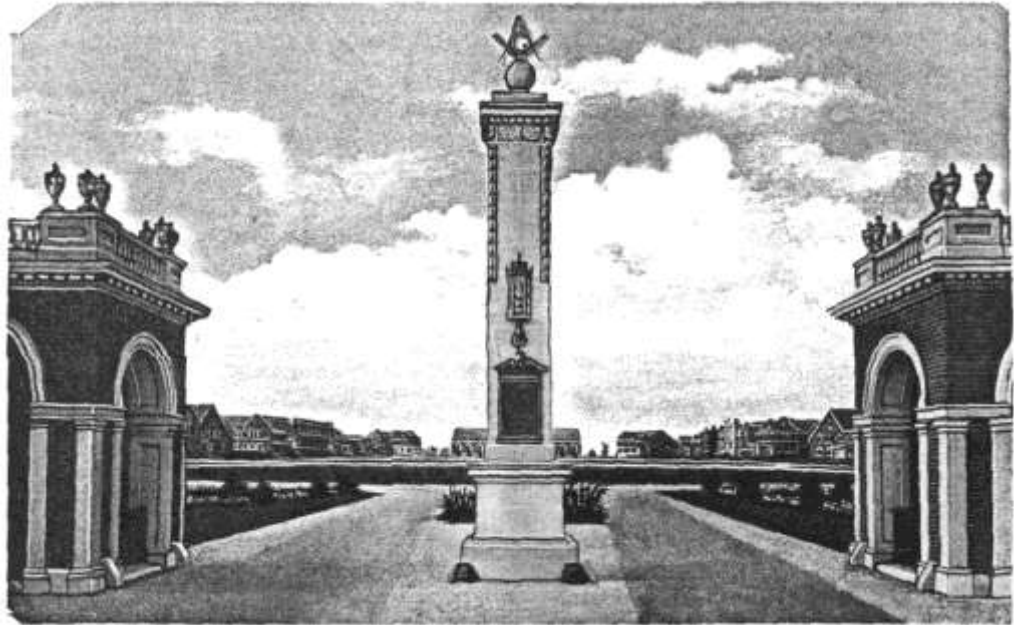
This subdivision and Suburbanite endeavor showed untold success through 1930 and part of 1931, in late 1931 it slowed down, in 1932 it stopped. The bottom dropped out. Houses sprang up here, there, and everywhere. The growth both in population and in the number of houses was phenomenal. But the depression stopped all things, even phenomenal things.

But despite the depression, and no doubt recently aided by Roosevelt's appropriations, and the flood of last year, there is an abnormal flowing of Suburbanites into St. Matthews, once again. Witness the development of English Village, Kenbar, Norbourne, Bonnie Woods, Druid Hills, and any number of other aristocratically named subdivisions. This Suburbanite movement is comparatively new in the transition of St. Matthews. It is in its infancy. Just what will be the result of this most recent movement in the transition of St. Matthews will be hard to say.

## ST. MATTHEWS Don C. Leahy, English 101-B, Miss Lyons, May 1938

The purchasing of land from Henry Fried, Sr., for use as grounds for the Masonic Widows and Orphans Home \_\_\_\_\_  
-movement. The completion of the buildings on the Masonic Home Campus has  
given the Masonic Order one of the finest and most complete units of this type to be found in the world today. Administer-  
ing as it does both to young  
and to old, to education and  
to health, the men behind this  
deserve to be complemented.

Two very recent movements, and they are so recent that they can't be classified as movements in the same sense as the other movements in this article, but more like minor movements within a major movement, - so it will be better to say two recent incidents that may or may not be important to the St. Matthews to come. We may very easily let these incidents go with just mentioning them for I am inclined to believe that they will go down as parts of the Suburbanite movement. But these incidents are the erection of a group of apartment houses, such as Greentree Manor, for the Suburbanite who doesn't want to own a home, and the construction of the new U.S. Highway 60 through St. Matthews. Greentree Manor - a community apartment idea - is erected on twenty-six acres of the old Fenly Estate just outside of the city limits. This twenty-six acres brought the owner one hundred and four thousand dollars.



MASONIC WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' HOME, LOUISVILLE, KY. V 39

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The new U.S. Highway 60 is a super highway, made of concrete forty one feet wide from the city limits on Lexington Road to the junction of Frankfort Avenue and Lexington Road. From this junction through St. Matthews up to Sherrin Avenue, it ranges from sixty-two to sixty-four feet wide in some parts. From Sherrin Avenue east to Middletown the lanes are separated and we have two twenty-one foot roadways of this magnificent concrete, one for outgoing traffic, and the other for incoming traffic. In between these two lanes we have a ten foot ground plot that is to be used for trees, shrubs, and flowers. And from this word picture of this new super highway one can readily get an idea of the improvement of this one over the old 60, considering the old was only twenty feet wide from tip to stern.

No doubt this Suburbanite movement will go on and carry over into a new and greater St. Matthews. But even as I say this I am given pause, and I must think; What if Louisville suddenly reaches out its tentacles and draws St. Matthews within its limits? Then of necessity must St. Matthews' active growth slow down. For St. Matthews will then grow as a section of Louisville, and not as an individual town. Once a small integral part is swallowed up by a large integral part, the small becomes part of the large, and naturally is responsible to the large as part of it (the large). It is no longer responsible, exclusively, to its small self. Therefore, once, consumed by Louisville, and assimilation takes place, the growth of St. Matthews will, whether it wants it or not, slow down. Have you ever watched a car from an airplane? Or better still, driven a car on the outskirts of a city? You know you have, and you know while you were on the outskirts you drove like sixty. But once into the city you were forced to slow down. Your car is gobbled up in the traffic of the metropolis, you of necessity are forced to slow down. You get into a lane, you can't get around; you can't get over or out of your lane, you may make sallies back and forth and forge ahead momentarily, but finally, you of the speedy ideas, are forced to travel at the pace of traffic in general. So with St. Matthews and her active growth, that up to the time she is acquired by Louisville, will have been much more in favor of the small in proportion to the large. Upon or shortly after acquisition, this pace must be slowed down to the forward pace of the large. Here and there, sections of a whole may for a time show more advancement than the whole. But not for any great period of time. Eventually the sections slow down and follow the pace of the entity to which they belong. St. Matthews will be no different from others when she is taken into the limits of Louisville.

A recapitulation of the number of places in St. Matthews will give you some idea of its growth. Today, St. Matthews, in a one-mile stretch from the city limits east, has thirteen gasoline filling stations, two drug stores, the same two home-owned grocery stores, three barber shops, five beauty parlors, the Ray Clinic, in charge of Dr. J. C. and G. H. Ray. In addition she has three or four other doctors, three dentists, a pool parlor, a department store, two dry goods stores, eight hard or soft drinking emporiums, two electrical stores, a plumbing shop, an outstanding automobile painting shop—A. L. Hansen and Bros, two banks, three chain stores, two bakeries, three automobile agencies, three coal yards, a Merchant Ice and Cold Storage Plant, and that latest development along the industrial line, -- the Palmer Asbestos and Roofing Company, established in 1935. The interurban car line was abolished in August, 1935. St. Matthews proudly boasts of ace-high school and church facilities.

### Conclusion.

We can in conclusion, then, sum up the advance of St. Matthews under three likely headings. The first of which is represented by the Dan Gilman era, giving birth to St. Matthews, -- her history and her earliest days -- and classified under the heading of advantage of strategic position. The second, then, is that of the Potato Regime, when King Potato reigned, with the Bauer's in the spotlight because they represent the connecting link of the Old St. Matthews to the New and Modern St. Matthews, and because they themselves are an integral part of that Middle St. Matthews. The third and last advance of this transition is characterized by the suburbanite. And I have used the Volunteer Fire Association, the National cemetery, and the Recreational Factors as a sort of build-up for the Suburbanites.

First and most important, coincident both with her founding and with her growth throughout the years, is her advantage of strategic position. To this advantage she owes much; because it has stayed with her through the years, it is with her now, and ever accented, it will be with her forever. St. Matthews -- where five roads come together -- know as The Point. And what a road that new U.S. 60 Highway is going to be? What won't it do in aiding and abetting this new Suburbanite movement? What won't it do to the ultimate transition of St. Matthews?

Then to potatoes she owes much. To potatoes, to the farmers, and to the Produce Exchange she owes much. It is to these that she is thankful for gaining for her an enviable position on the map, that position of being the world's leading shipping market of potatoes for some ten years is not to be sneered at. And the first great increase in her population is directly attributed to potatoes, -- the increasing of a population of one hundred and fifty people to three thousand in thirty years.

Now to her latest great stride, as represented by the Suburbanite she owes much. Starting with the selling of those first lands by Zehnder and Holtzheimer to the subdivision companies, augmented more recently by the Rooseveltian appropriations, St. Matthews is experiencing the greatest growth, in population and it the number of houses in her midst, she has ever known. Houses now dot the way side as thick as bees dot a hive. Truly, St. Matthews has taken tremendous strides to betterment since that far gone day, eighteen years ago, when we got off the Walnut Street car at the city limits and walked those long, houseless miles till we spied the little house we were to call our home. So in this third phase of her transition, St. Matthews is thankful to the Suburbanite bringing with him new houses, new stores, -- new everything.

The potato growers sit back and look with \_\_\_\_\_ askance upon this newest of our heroine's bids for fame. Reluctantly, they watch the potato lands being pushed up beyond Lyndon, Prospect, Worthington, and Middletown. But then the quality and the quantity of the potato is no longer what it used to be. They will, eventually, get used to the change and become acclimated to it. Although some swear they never will. And with the Suburbanite comes the spreading of the business section. No longer will the business section be confined to that "main drag" of St. Matthews, bounded as I have told you on the East by St. Matthews Avenue and on the West by the junction of Frankfort Avenue and Lexington Road. The Standard Oil Company just last week purchased the triangle adjacent to the west of the junction of these two roads. And now business houses will extend down Lexington Road and Frankfort Avenue toward the city limits.

So in this era of Industrial Efficiency...Technocrats and Technocracy...In this machine age...The age of speed. Fast women and faster automobiles...This age of airplanes, balloons, dirigibles, and zeppelins...Of Zephyrs and streamlined locomotives...This age of Communism, Fascism, and many-other-isms...Of deadly gases and the fear of fellow men. In this age, things do change, St. Matthews in transition has not been unique.

**Bibliography.** Most of the data in this article was gotten from people; the following are some:

"Daddy" Hite, Mr. Powers, Mr. Boston, Hardin Herr, Mr. Watkins, Mr. Fisher and The Bauer's. *Salubrious Suburbia*, by Hewitt Taylor and *The Courier Journal*.

**An afterthought:** This article is a written statement of how one who has lived in St. Matthews for 18 years has been affected by the growth of things around him. One who didn't know they ad affected him so much. One who wasn't conscious, he thought, of this growth, until he started writing, then things flowed forth as though he had been conscious of every move. What a store house our subconscious mind is!!!!  
Don C. Leahy