

The Influence of the Wornall Family

The 1920s brought rapid residential growth in the WPHA area. In the last article in this series, we mentioned the development of Westmoreland Terrace (1917), Waldo Center (1920), and Stanwood Place (1923) subdivisions, all clustered along 75th Street from Wornall Road to the west side of Jefferson. 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.

Charles Wornall was one of the sons of John Wornall, who built the Wornall Home and owned most of the land east of Brookside from 59th Street south to 67th Street. By 1900, the Wornall heirs had also acquired farmland from 69th to 75th Streets between Summit and Wornall Road. Charles' portion of that tract was from just north of 74th south to 75th Street.

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. They sold land to Melville and William Aye in 1904, who then resold it in 1907 to the Inland Security Co., which developed it as Norwaldo subdivision. The Wornalls sold the adjoining land to the south in 1907 to Charles Patten, who developed it as Waldo Heights in the same year.

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 Waldo Ridge.

In 1917, Whitehill's executor, James Pickett, quickly subdivided the Whitehill land into Westmoreland Terrace. 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.

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.

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.

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 the early 1920s, she sold this land to the J.C. Nichols' Co. Nichols, together with the Rutledge Building Co., had also acquired several of the northernmost lots 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. The second part, platted in December 1925, includes the north halves of the 7100 blocks of Summit (east side) and Jefferson (both sides).

In the next issue, we'll complete this series with a look at the last and largest of our subdivisions, from which our Homes Association originally derived its name.