

Chapter 9

WE REMEMBER ROELAND PARK

Chapter 9 of the History of the City of Roeland Park is a compilation of reminiscence by present and former members of the City. In this Chapter, individuals recall when and how they came to the area; people they knew; activities they engaged in; and some of the governmental activities, etc. Much of the information in this chapter was obtained by interview with the individuals quoted. Other material was provided by the individual identified with the comments.

What better way is there to start this last chapter of the History of the City of Roeland Park than to relate the story of the Roe Family. Since actual interviews with the Roe family were not possible, the family history presented here was taken from an article in the Kansas City Star dated September 22, 1957, and from other sources.

The John Roe Family

The John Roe Family settled in the area that now bears its name as early as 1880 when John Roe purchased the first part of the land that became his farm. It was there that he built the house that endured until 1957 when it was removed to make way for an exit ramp from Roe Avenue to Johnson Drive.

In constructing his home, durability was one thing that John Roe wanted. The other was spaciousness. Every room in the house was what commonly could be designated as large. There were five upstairs bedrooms, and the third floor, or attic – which was never finished – could have contained four more.

The home had features which were the marks of convenience, even luxury, in that earlier construction era. The kitchen had 6-foot cabinets. The pantry was larger than the average kitchen of the modern home. In the kitchen floor was a trap door leading to the basement. A back stairway to the second floor bedrooms opened off the kitchen. Originally the floors were of pine which endured on the second floor for the life of the house. However, downstairs floors were replaced with oak in 1930.

The family consisted of John Roe and his wife, two sons and four daughters. The mother died in 1893 and John Roe in 1920. Thomas, the oldest son died in 1921. Charles, the youngest son, died in 1936. The daughters were Catherine, Isabella, Margaret and Ellen. Miss Isabella Roe lived to be 105 years old. Miss Margaret lived to be 90 years old.

After the death of John Roe, various developers tried to acquire land from the surviving sisters. Miss Margaret Roe recalled, in 1957, that "we wanted to keep the property. It wasn't so much that we realized that its value, in dollars, would increase. But it was a sentimental attachment to the land which had been assembled by our father. We held on but we were being squeezed by what I call the forces of greed."

Margaret Roe stated that "we became land-poor, or property-poor. As we held on, the taxes went up and up. We began borrowing money in 1923 to pay our taxes. In 1935, we had to borrow \$60,000 to pay the taxes."

The brothers and sisters divided the farm and each took separate title to particular tracts. They began to surrender to developers. Charles sold some acreage on the south side of what is now Johnson Drive. Mrs. Ellen Roe Bryant sold acreage which was developed as Bryantwood. The big sale by the sisters was of more than 500 acres to Charles E. Vawter. From that sale there was developed the area of Roeland Park, Roe Manor Heights and Roe Highlands.

While they sold some of their land, the sisters also gave away tracts. They gave land to the French Institute of Notre Dame de Sion, and later gave land for the St. Agnes Parish development. They gave the land upon which the City of Roeland Park developed its swimming pool.

Mr. Carl Johnson, 5114 Buena Vista, Roeland Park, KS

A long term resident of the City of Roeland Park, Mr. Carl Johnson has lived near 51st and Buena Vista Streets in Roeland Park since 1921. He has a remarkable recollection of the area around his home and in the Southridge area. He constructed his present home in 1953, next door to his family home and a building, constructed by his father, used as a machine shop for many years.

Mr. Johnson's father had seen locations where a family lived over the place of business and didn't wish to have his home like that. So he built the machine shop that was next to his home. The original property was purchased from Leo and Mary Kemper who were related to the Kemper family, bankers in Kansas City, Missouri. The property extended to the west from Buena Vista and, in addition to the house and shop, had about six rows of concord grapes as well as peach trees.

The original home did not have public water until in the 1930s. Natural gas service was not acquired until 1942. The residents of the area also had trouble getting telephone service. Electric service was available. Sanitary facilities drained to a septic tank on the grounds.

Carl Johnson's father emigrated to the United States from Sweden where he had worked as a blacksmith. His name was Johansen but he changed that to Johnson when he arrived at Ellis Island. In his first year in the United States, the elder Johnson had 52 jobs. He moved from job to job in order to see the United States. Eventually he arrived in Topeka and subsequently moved to the Johnson County area. Carl Johnson was born in Oklahoma during a time when his father was working there.

Mr. Johnson recalls many of the residents that lived in and around the Southridge area during the early years. Included in this group was Miss Catherine (Kate) Roe and her sisters, the Robert Pilley family, the Hudson family, the O'dell family and many others.

In reminiscing about Miss Kate Roe, Mr. Johnson recalls that Miss Roe, who lived in the stone house on 53rd Street (Now Mission Road), feuded with Mr. J. C. Nichols, the developer of the Country Club Plaza, and subdivisions such as Fairway and Prairie Village. On one occasion Nichols wanted to buy 80 acres of land and Kate Roe, in a high necked dress and high button shoes, responded saying "I'll not sell you a piece of ground until hell freezes over and I'm there to pour water on you." He also recalls that once, during a PTA meeting, Miss Kate Roe said she was a tax payer and insisted on speaking from the floor, He says she swayed the group with her oratory, somewhat in the style used by Everett Dirkson in later years.

Mr. Johnson remembers construction that took place over the years. He states that the store building at 51st and Buena Vista was originally constructed with wood from old wooden boxes. He recalls that a pre-fab home could be purchased from the Montgomery Ward catalog for about \$500. He remembers a house in the 4900 block of Buena Vista that was just a cow barn, moved to the site and subsequently remodeled. A house constructed in the mid 1930s, on Elledge Street was one of the first cinder block houses constructed in the area. It was supposed to resemble a Southwest US home. A home near 4000 Elledge was constructed by a Mr. Lyles who built it in 1933 with World War I bonus money. A mustard colored house on West 47th was a gambling den. Someone, who had lost money there, bombed the house and a part of a piano was blown clear to the Roesland School.

Mr. Johnson says that the Hudson' family lived on Reinhardt. Mary Hudson was the owner of the Silverking Oil Company, and later the Hudson Oil Company. He describes Mary Hudson as a "tough old gal" who said that as long as she could sell rubber and beer she could make a living. She lived upstairs in the house and rented out the ground floor. The home was later sold to the Higginbotham families who were manufacturers of the speakers used at drive in movies.

Mr. Johnson remembers riding the Strang Line. He noted that the cars were divided into two sections, one of which was used by men and had cupidors and ash trays. While streets were not all paved, he recalls that Roe Avenue was once paved with stone quarried in the area and set on end.

On the more lurid side of life in prewar Southridge, Mr. Johnson remembers that in the early 1930s 53rd Street, west of Mission Road was called "lovers lane." He says his father referred to the area as the place for ladies night out. There were no houses on the street and fairly deep ditches ran along both sides. During one period of time, a robber would approach one of the cars to rob and to "take his turn" with the lady in the car. Police protection was almost non-existent since telephones had not yet been installed and obtaining help was nearly impossible. The robber and rapist was caught when a group of women hid in the ditch on either side of the road, set up a decoy, and when the assailant approached the car, the women rose up and caught him. That put a stop to this problem. The assailant was the manager of a theater and lived not far from where the attacks were made. He had approached the car by walking across the golf course.

Mr. Johnson states that a nudist colony was on the top of the hill, north of 47th and El Monte Streets. Shelter houses were built and cattle tanks were brought in which were filled from tank trucks. They had barbecues, and other entertainment, walking about in the buff. It lasted until the early 1940s. Mr. Johnson says that on Sunday afternoons there were all kinds of fancy cars up there. One day a car load of people from the colony, in a Buick Convertible, and wearing only bathing suits, came roaring up the hill and were involved in an accident. The Wyandotte County police were called but refused jurisdiction because the car was on the Johnson County side of the road. To solve the problem, it was suggested that the car be pushed over into Wyandotte County but the police wouldn't let this happen.

Contemporary with the period, in the 1920s and 1930s, Mr. Johnson recalls that three crosses were burned by the Ku Klux Klan at a home on Neosho. Carl says his father was quite frightened by this event,

Mrs. George Allen, 4700 Reinhardt

In an interview, Mrs. George Allen reported that she has lived at her present address since 1939 when she and her husband had the home constructed. Mrs. Ladora Allen was raised on a farm near Pleasanton, KS. She married George Allen in December 1938. They moved to their home the following year. The Allen's had one son who still lives in the area.

Mrs. Allen is an avid outdoors person and, at the time of the interview, had just returned from a fishing trip to Canada. She mentioned that she and her husband had gone to Canada in 1939 while the house was being constructed. She also told us of a recent float trip in Costa Rica. Her participation was discouraged because of her age but she insisted and went on the trip.

Mrs. Allen recalls that in the early years, shopping was done in the 45th and Bell and 45th and State Line area of Kansas City. She recalls riding the Strang Line which passed near her home. Mr. Allen, a mechanic, was an associate of William Schleicher and they had a service station near 47th and Mission Road. Later in life, Mr. Allen worked for the Butternut Bread Bakery. Mrs. Allen was a seamstress during the years her children were in school.

She recalls that one year two Brahma bulls got loose and one found its way to her door. It was chased around the neighborhood and finally was caught near her home when it butted a tree and knocked itself out.

Mr. Allen's mother was an original member of the United Brethren Church that eventually became the United Methodist Church (See Chapter on churches.) When the church moved to its 47th Street location, Mrs. Allen became a member and is one of only three members of the present church that attended the church on 47th Street. The others were Mrs. Maureen Fate and Mrs. J. B. Waltrip.

Mr. Allen was a champion golfer and played at the Old Mission Golf Course. He was reported to have beaten the course professional, a Mr. Wotherspoon, on several occasions. Mrs. Allen remembers it as a 27-hole course, later reduced to 18 holes. Mr. Allen is reported to have quit playing competitive golf

when he was approached by a reputed underworld character and directed to throw a match. Mrs. Allen recalls that her mother-in-law was a cook at the Old Mission Golf Course Club House.

Mrs. Allen remembers that before houses filled up the area, there were caves throughout the area. One cave had considerable water and an effort was made to find where this water went. Dye was added but the ultimate disposition of the water was never determined. On another occasion, her son dropped a gun into a hole. The Allens tied a rope around their son and lowered him into the hole until he was "almost out of sight." The gun was recovered. Mrs. Allen says that if the gun had not been recovered, her husband would still be digging for it.

Mrs. Allen remarked that the streets in Shawnee Place were all named for Indian tribes. She stated that she was quite upset when the Township Board acquiesced to the Nichols Company and renamed the streets to conform to the Nichols development's street names.

Mrs. Allen states that persons that were influential in the neighborhood and in the community included an uncle of George Allen named Virgil Stuart. Mr. Stuart is supposed to have been the builder of the Roesland School at some time. She also feels that Dr. Howland of the Evangelical United Brethren Church was one of the more important people in the area.

Mr. John H. Barry

Former City Councilman, City of Roeland Park

Mr. John H. Barry, a banker with the Grand Avenue Bank, Kansas City, Mo., was elected to the Roeland Park City Council and served from January 8, 1954 to June 22, 1954. He resigned from office when he moved to Prairie Village. Mr. Barry ran for the City Council when friends pointed out that the south side of the City was not represented on the Council. At the time he resided at 5710 Nall Avenue, next to the small church building that was then occupied by the Trinity Lutheran Church. His reminiscing did not reveal any significant problems or activities during his term of office.

Mr. Barry remembers that when he moved into his home in 1948, Nall Avenue was unpaved and there were no sewers. He remembers that, one year, he planted his tomatoes over his septic tank. He did not comment on the results. When Nall was paved, he recalls that the assessment was fairly nominal. However when the sewer was installed, he received a large assessment due to his lot having a 125-foot frontage. He recalls that the street was paved first, then the sewer was installed requiring the street to be cut and repaved.

Mr. Barry remembers that when he moved into his house, he and his neighbors considered that they lived in Mission. (*Ed note.* His home was in the Mission Hills subdivision.) When the City of Roeland Park was incorporated, the City boundary was established at the rear property line of the homes along the west side of Nall. This caused some confusion on the part of these residents. But Mr. Barry acknowledges that, by so doing, responsibility for maintenance of Nall Avenue rested with the City of Roeland Park and was not divided between Roeland Park and Mission.

Mr. Barry recalls an incident when a neighbor complained about a spirea hedge that divided their property. After discussion, it was agreed that Jack would remove the hedge, but the neighbor would make arrangements to have it hauled away. The hedge was more than 100 feet long and required many truck loads for removal. After about six truck loads had been removed, the neighbor decided that was too much. So Jack said, Ok, he would just burn the rest. But he reminded the neighbor that a lot of smoke would be coming her way. The neighbor decided to continue to have the hedge trimmings hauled away.

Mrs. June Burtle

Mrs. June Burtle says that she and her husband first moved to the Roeland Park area in 1948 when they purchased a house at 5310 West 50th Street. They lived there until 1952 when they purchased the house at 5448 Roe Avenue.

The Roe Avenue house had previously been the office of Charles E. Vawter. At the time, there was a fence across 55th Street which was not cut through. The Vawter Company also maintained warehousing behind and across the street from the house the Burtles were acquiring.

Mrs. Burtle recalls that her husband, the late O. Eugene Burtle, recognized the need for an additional bedroom with the birth of their son, and second child. Gene Burtle began negotiating with Vawter and agreed to exchange the equity in the 50th Street home for the down payment on the Roe Avenue home. He advised June that the purchase was imminent and took her to inspect the proposed new home. Mrs. Burtle states that she objected to the paneling that had been used in the building when it was an office. Vawter agreed to redecorate to her specifications, which he did.

Mrs. Burtle states that she still objected to the house. She says she told her husband that she "just knew that three undesirable things would happen." One was that 55th Street would be opened, creating considerable traffic. The second was that Roe would be widened to four lanes, creating still more traffic. And third, that someone wouldn't make the corner and would drive their car into the house.

Before Mr. Burtle died, the first two events had taken place. One day, sometime after his passing, Mrs. Burtle was returning home from work in Prairie Village when she noted considerable flashing red lights at the corner of 55th and Roe. When she drove into her driveway she saw a car had left the street and had hit the east side of her home. She states that she got out of her car, laughing, spread her arms to the heavens and yelled "See, I told you so!"

**Mr. Jack M. Carpenter, 4910 Briar, Roeland Park, KS,
Former Mayor and Current Councilman**

Mr. Carpenter reflected upon his years of service to the City of Roeland Park. He recalls that at the time he was the Mayor of the City, the total City budget was not as large as today's police department budget. He states that it was about this time that the City began moving forward. At the time he took office the City relied mainly on Ad Valorem taxes as its source of funds. There were no sales tax revenues and no revenue sharing with the county. The City did receive some federal revenue sharing. Because of the lack of revenues, the City was limited in what it could do. Further, the City had little planning and was operated on a "seat of our pants" basis.

The lack of funds to meet current needs resulted in deterioration of the City's infrastructure. Funds were not available for anything except emergency maintenance. Purchase of new vehicles and other equipment was limited.

At this time the City elected to build a public works building in association with the City of Westwood. However a dispute occurred and Westwood withdrew from the project. The City went ahead with the public works building and began to work on the infrastructure problems. Mr. Carpenter recalled that one year only limited raises were given City employees. However, at the end of the year the City had been able to complete its work under budget and bonuses were given to the City's employees.

Mr. Carpenter states that the controversy created by a memo from the City Attorney was one of the major problems the City has faced. This controversy was about alleged discrimination and resulted in considerable newspaper and TV coverage. Prior to this occurrence, citizen involvement in City affairs had been limited. Council meetings were not attended and meetings often were quite short.

Mr. Carpenter states that currently there is more citizen participation in the City's affairs. He states that interest picked up with the redevelopment of the shopping district. While there has been controversy in the Council, most of the time it has been a quiet City and its government has been effective.

Mr. Carpenter says the major events that had some impact on the City, included the development and construction of Roe Village, the donation of the land for the swimming pool by the Roe sisters, and the acquisition of the new City Hall building. He includes the acquisition and development of Nall Park as a major City accomplishment. He recalls that the City received a donation of 7.5 acres of land

for the park and purchased an additional 7.5 acres from the St. Agnes Parish for \$7,500. The development costs were partially paid from a federal grant.

Mr. Carpenter states that the acquisition of the Skyline School building was one of the better projects that the City has engaged in. The building, which is now used as a community center, was purchased for about \$200,000. He states that the cost of care and maintenance of this building comes from a 0.25 percent sales tax. Recently the building received a new roof at a cost of about \$100,000. The building is operated by the Johnson County Park and Recreation Department. The City of Roeland Park pays \$20,000 a year for this service.

Reflecting upon citizens who have had an influence on the City he mentions former mayors Gene Moore and Milford Grassburger. Among the political figures that provided more than routine service, he mentioned Marvin and Judy Katz, the latter was the first lady to serve on the council. Others included Bob McGowan, Ed Proffit and John Van Keppel,

He mentioned that Mrs. Braun, the Avon Lady, served the community for 20 years and "knew everybody and everything in town." Civic leaders included John Sullivan and John Houlehan at the Mid American Bank. Another was Mike Unrein, the owner of the bowling alley, who was active in City and political affairs.

Mr. William K. Dyer

The Dyer family moved to Roeland Park at the end of World War II. They moved into their original home at 5401 Rosewood Street in 1946. Mr. Dyer says that, at the time they purchased their home, Rosewood Street was known as Elmwood Street. Subsequently, they moved next door to 5407 Rosewood Street. Mr. Dyer served as President of the Roeland Park Homes Association prior to the incorporation of the City of Roeland Park. He also served on the Board of School District No. 92, the Roesland School District.

He states that the Homes Association was not in favor of incorporating the City but had some concerns about the effect on the residents of the Roeland Park subdivisions if Mission should incorporate and annex the Roeland Park area. He says this threat was of great concern to Charles E. Vawter who had just recently begun the development of a business district in the Roeland Park subdivisions at 51st and Roe Avenue. The result was that the Directors of the Roeland Park Homes Association agreed to the incorporation. (*Ed note - Charles Kent, also a director of the Homes Association has stated that he was the only one to actively oppose this decision.*)

Mr. Dyer states that when the decision to incorporate was made, a meeting was held with Mission representatives and it was agreed that only one city or the other should have Nall Avenue. It was considered impractical to place the dividing line between the two cities down the middle of Nall. As a result the west property line of homes on the west side of Nall was selected as the boundary between the two cities.

The Dyers remember that their children attended the Roeland Park School after it was constructed. Their son, originally attended Roesland School. Their daughter began kindergarten at the Evangelical United Brethren Church, 51st and Cedar, when the Roeland Park School was not completed in time for the incoming students in September 1951.

Mr. Dyer served on the school board for three years. He recalls that every decision that was reached during his tenure was by a unanimous vote of 3 to 0. He states he was not on the board at the time it was expanded to five members. He also recalls that elections were conducted on a town hall basis held in the auditorium of the Roesland School.

Mr. Dyer stated that when the Roesland School was expanded, space for playgrounds was also acquired. This necessitated the moving of several houses. Some difficulty was experienced in finding buyers. He recalls that the land for the Roeland Park school was fairly expensive. But that the land for the Skyline school was purchased for about \$1,000 per acre.

At the time the Skyline school site was selected, two options were available. One site was in what is now the City of Fairway and the other was the Skyline school site. Opposition to the Fairway site developed among residents of the area. At the same time, a move began in the area of Roeland Park north of 51st Street in support of the Skyline site. Mr. Dyer recalls that a public meeting was held at the Roesland school auditorium and nearly 900 persons attended. With one group voting against the Fairway site and one group voting for the Skyline site, the result was approval of the Skyline site by nearly 95 percent of the vote. Incidentally, the Skyline school received its name as a result of a contest among the students in District No. 92. Mr. Dyer's son was the winner of the contest, recommending the name Skyline School. But Mr. Dyer points out that the School Superintendent, Walter Giffin, felt it would be inappropriate to award the prize to the Dyer son.

Ersel Gordon

Mr. Ersel Gordon was a member of the Roesland School District No. 92 School Board. He served on the board from 1957 to 1969 and was President from 1960 to 1962 and from 1967 to 1968. He was on the Board at the time District No. 92 merged with District No. 512. He first ran for the school board in 1955 and lost by one vote. He ran again, at his neighbor's suggestion, in 1957, and won by six votes. After that he was reelected without any problems.

Mr. Gordon moved to a home on Wells Street in 1949. He recalls that the Skyline school was to have been built at 49th and Rosewood Drive, or at an alternative site on Mission Road, near St. Agnes Church. He states there was quite a squabble about this school. He confirms Bill Dyer's recollections that people in the Mission Road area opposed a school at that location while those in Roe Highlands wanted the school where it eventually was constructed. He also recalls the decision to construct was made rather abruptly.

Mr. Gordon recalls that the Superintendent of District No. 92 wanted a bond issue just prior to the merger with District No. 512. The purpose of the bond issue was to repair and reconstruct the Roesland School, the front of which was coming away from the rest of the building and was in danger of falling.

Mr. Gordon confirms that another factor that influenced the request for the bond issue was the feeling, by the District No. 92 School Board that the people in the district would not get a "fair shake" from the new District No. 512 if the construction was not accomplished first. The bond issue failed and all subsequent construction and repair became the responsibility of District No. 512.

He recalls that when he lived on Wells Street, his home was across the street from the 5th fairway at the Old Mission Golf Course. He says that errant shots kept him well supplied with golf balls.

Mr. Gordon recalls that there has been a large turn over in home owners in the Roeland Park area. He feels that many young people moved into the area where they started a family. But since so many houses were two-bedroom, families moved out when they outgrew the houses. Mr. Gordon now lives in Fairway, Kansas.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hoskins

Mr. and Mrs. Hoskins and their 3½ years old son, Charles Lee Hoskins moved to Roeland Park on May 10, 1948. A second son, Ronald, was born November 17, 1951.

Mr. Hoskins recalls that at the time they moved to their home, only two houses were on the south side of 50th Street and five on the north side, between Rosewood Drive and Nall Avenue. Not a tree was in sight except for a persimmon tree at 50th and Nall. Today you cannot see down the street because of the forest, planted by the residents.

Mrs. Hoskins has wonderful memories of the day care center at 50th and Nall Avenue. It was operated by a Mrs. Patterson and a Mrs. Neal. They had added a special room to the back of their home for this purpose. Both of the Hoskins' sons, during their preschool years, benefited from the teachings of these two ladies. Mrs. Hoskins says that they will never be forgotten by the children they loved and cared for. Their home still stands and it holds wonderful memories of children's laughter.

Mrs. Hoskins says that her eldest son, Charles Lee, attended Roesland School until the Skyline School was opened. The younger son, Ronald, attended Skyline School. Both boys attended the Old Mission Junior High School, Shawnee-Mission North High School and the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Charles Lee was a member of the first Boy Scout Troop organized in the Roeland Park subdivisions. He had the honor to be the first to raise the flag when the Skyline School was opened.

Older residents will remember that Air Force Captain Charles L. Hoskins was one of two Roeland Park residents to lose his life in the Viet Nam War. The other was Pfc William Phalp who lived at 50th Terrace and Rosewood Drive, just around the corner from the Hoskins residence. Captain Hoskins is remembered by a plaque at the Nall Park, a tree planted at the Skyline School and a plaque at the United Methodist Church. "Billy" Phalp is remembered by a flowering shrub at the Skyline School and the plaque at the United Methodist Church.

Reminiscing about old times, the Hoskins remember the fire works display by the Teeter family at 50th and Rosewood Drive, their pleasure in expanding and upgrading their home; sitting on the lawn on hot summer evenings; missing vacations because Mr. Hoskins was in the Air Force Reserve, and the few long term residents that remain in the area.

Mr. Myron Nelson

Mr. Myron Nelson has never lived in the City of Roeland Park. However, he served as chief engineer and director of the Mission Main Sewer District from 1947 to 1978. He has intimate knowledge of actions that affected the growth of the City. Prior to being hired by Johnson County he served the State of Kansas Board of Health as the engineer responsible for State monitoring of domestic water supplies.

At the time he was employed, Mr. Nelson states that he had received a stipend to attend Harvard University. When asked by the County Commissioners what it would take to hire him, he stated a salary figure, use of a car, adequate office space, and no political interference in the conduct of his office or in the personnel matters of the Sewer District. The County Commissioners accepted his proposal. For 30 years he operated on this basis. At the time he was hired, the salary paid to him was the highest paid to any Johnson County employee.

Mr. Nelson recalls that at the time he was hired, Charles Vawter was in process of developing the Roeland Park, Roe Manor Heights and Roe Highlands subdivisions. He states that Vawter installed his own sewers without inspection. Although specifications were supposed to meet State standards, the sewers did not necessarily meet these standards. By the time the standards were adopted by the Sewer District, many of the homes in the Vawter area were occupied. Thus only necessary corrections were made as the situations subsequently developed. Mr. Nelson believes that Vawter had three sewage treatment facilities. He does not recall where they were or the type of treatment they provided.

Mr. Nelson says the wastewater treatment facility at 48th and Nall Avenue was completed in 1949. The plant was designed for a population of 15,000 which was soon reached and the plant had to be expanded. The plant was placed in its present location because it was felt that discharge of the plant effluent into Brush Creek would not be acceptable to the Nichols' interest or permitted by the City of Kansas City since the effluent would flow through the Plaza. Instead the discharge of effluent to Turkey Creek was selected and Kansas City, Kansas made no objections. At the time the plant was put in operation, lateral and joint sewer districts were organized and the Vawter sewers were connected to trunk sewers leading to the Nall Avenue plant.

Mr. Nelson recalls that one of the problems faced by the Wastewater District was the limitation on the bonds that could be issued. This limitation seriously impeded the needed expansion. Bond issues were limited to a percentage of the assessed valuation within the lateral sewer districts or joint sewer districts. At the time, Johnson County was one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. Eventually a moratorium on construction was required until adequate sewer service could be provided.

Mr. Nelson recalls that the area of present City of Roeland Park, east of Roe Avenue, was mainly seweried with septic tanks. He does not recall when sewers were installed to eliminate this practice. He does say that when the Fairway Manor area was being developed, he refused to accept some sewers that had been installed. He required that these sewers be upgraded to district standards. He also recalls that a sewer was needed on what is now 51st Street. There was opposition to this sewer until he was able to show the Council of Home Owners Associations a picture with ducks swimming in the street.

Mr. Nelson recalls that on one occasion the City of Roeland Park threatened to withdraw from the Wastewater District. Nelson then asked the Council what it intended to do with its waste. The Council said they would deliver it to the treatment plant themselves. But Nelson informed the Council that would not be acceptable and that the City would have to build its own treatment plant. The Council dropped the idea.

He remembers that one of the major problems that developed in the area was due to roof drains connected to sanitary sewers. This surcharged the sewers and caused backup in homes located in low lying areas. On another occasion, Mr. Nelson recalls that a sewer drained to a manhole near Roeland Drive and Johnson Drive. Several homes and buildings were connected to this manhole, which quickly became surcharged. The problem was that there was no outlet to this manhole. Mr. Nelson recalled that one resident, trying to solve the problem, installed a sump pump which merely created a circular flow.

Mr. Nelson stated that when the Shawnee Place area was seweried, drainage was probably to Kansas City, Kansas. At the same time, a part of Kansas City, Kansas drained to the Johnson County facilities. This reciprocal agreement was beneficial to both communities. He did not mention any other areas with such reciprocal agreements.

Mr. Milford Ostenberg
Former Mayor and Councilman, City of Roeland Park

Mayor Milford Ostenberg is a highly successful business man who served as Director of Taxation for Trans World Air Lines. In an interview, Mr. Ostenberg related that he became active in City affairs when, on one occasion, he was planting a hedge near the curb in front of his house and a policeman stopped and told him that if he planted the hedge, the City would just tear it out. This rather arbitrary approach annoyed Mr. Ostenberg and he requested a hearing before the City Council. There he expressed the opinion that the City was being arbitrary in its requirements and overbearing in it's dealing with its citizens.

Mr. Ostenberg says that, in the course of this hearing, a council member stated something to the effect that if he didn't like the way the City was run, why didn't he run for the Council. The result was that he did run for Councilman, won and subsequently served on the Council from April 5, 1956 to March 25, 1959.

Mr. Ostenberg resigned from the Council on March 25, 1959, at which time he filed for the position of Mayor of the City of Roeland Park, succeeding Willis G. Moore who had elected not to run for reelection. Mayor Ostenberg served as Mayor from April 10, 1959 to April 7, 1961. On completion of his term of office as Mayor, he announced that he had served the City for five years, and now it was time for someone else to fill the positions that he had occupied.

Mr. Ostenberg recalls that there were two significant events during his tenure as Councilman and Mayor: The first occurred soon after his election to office. Because of his business background, he was placed on the City's Finance Committee. Because of his interest in the matter, he found that the City was not following either good business practices or requirements of the law. He became aware of the fact that the City was required to have an audit of its affairs, something it had not previously done. As a result of his recommendations, a firm was hired and an audit made at a cost of \$1,200.

Mr. Ostenberg says that he then proposed that the audit firm prepare monthly statements with the City Clerk providing a record of receipts and expenditures. This work was to be supplemented with

the preparation of the City's budget. This idea met with some resistance until it was determined that the audit firm would charge just \$50 per month or \$600 per year for the service and that this system was acceptable as a substitute for the audit, thus saving \$600 per year.

The second event took place in 1957 and 1958. The State of Kansas and the Kansas Turnpike Authority recommended that 18th Street and Roe Avenue be extended from Highway I-35 to Johnson Drive, as a limited access road with lanes divided by a solid medial strip. Together with Mayor Moore, Mr. Ostenberg, and other council members, objected to this plan because it would have divided the City in two. Various meetings were held, including public meetings at the Roeland Park School. Mr. Ostenberg and other City representatives met with State officials and finally convinced them that provisions had to be included in the street construction to permit the crossing of Roe Avenue at various points.

A side issue of the controversy over Roe Avenue was the threat of the Turnpike Authority to go ahead with their plans. This was countered, by the City, with the threat of establishing a 15 mph speed limit on Roe and enforcing it rigidly. Fortunately the matter was resolved.

Another event of interest took place in 1959 when Mayor Ostenberg presented Miss Isabella Roe a pin oak tree in honor of her 103rd birthday; and in recognition of Miss Roe's gift to the City of the land where the swimming pool is located. Mayor Ostenberg explained that they had asked Miss Roe what she would like for her 103rd birthday. She had replied that a tree would be nice.

As have many others, Mayor Ostenberg has retained, among his possessions, his pay for the year 1957. This uncashed check is for \$1.00. Mayor Ostenberg no longer resides in the City

**Mr. Michael E. Shartzer, 5112 Howe Drive
Former Mayor, City of Roeland Park**

In an interview, Mr. Shartzer reported that he grew up in the Southridge area of Roeland Park at 5251 Delmar. Mrs. Shartzer grew up in a house at 5236 Roe Avenue. Mr. Shartzer mentioned that his father built the first new house on the Roeland Park side of County Line Road just south of where Leos' Tavern was located.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Shartzer attended Roseland School and Shawnee Mission Rural High School, now known as Shawnee Mission North High School. Their children also attended these schools as well as Old Mission Junior High. Mr. Shartzer mentioned that his children attended kindergarten in the same room where he attended kindergarten. Mrs. Shartzer also attended St. Agnes school for a period of time. She mentioned that her brothers and sister attended elementary school at the Roeland Park School. Mrs. Shartzer's maiden name was Arnold.

Mr. Shartzer says that although he grew up in the area, he didn't become involved in City affairs until the late 60s or early 70s. He served on the Council from April 1975 to April 1981 and as Mayor from April 1981 to April 1989. He recalls that just before he ran for the council, retiring Mayor Grassburger was quoted in the Kansas City Star that Roeland Park was going to become the first slum in Johnson County. This irritated Mr. Shartzer to the point that he decided to do something about it and ran for councilman from the 4th Ward.

Mr. Shartzer recalls that he was not a "really docile child." When running for the council, he went from door to door soliciting votes. On occasion, he would approach a door and wonder if folks that had known him as a child still lived there. On several occasions they did. But he feels that his constituents forgave him for his sins as a child because he was elected with an overwhelming majority at his first election.

During his early terms in office, Mr. Shartzer recalls that each council district was allocated about \$10,000 for street repairs. This was inadequate. Only repairs were made. No additions were scheduled. Because of the selection process as to where money was to be spent, many people were unhappy because work was done or was not done in their area.

One of the first things that Mr. Shartzler implemented, as Mayor, was the imposition of a 1/2 of 1 percent sales tax. A study was made of the shopping habits of people who used the Venture Plaza area and it was found that a minority of shoppers was from Johnson County. Hence, the council was willing to adopt the sales tax since the preponderance of money would come from nonresident of the City.

Later, the second 1/2 of 1 percent was implemented which was used for the Community Center; and for the incremental financing for the shopping area. Mr. Shartzler mentioned that Councilman Wendel was mainly instrumental in arranging the financing for the Community Center and for the shopping area.

Mr. Shartzler recalls that he tried to get some consolidation of municipal functions during his second term of office. He tried to work out a joint venture with the City of Westwood for a public works building and a consolidated police department. The projects fell through. He recalls that he worked with the City of Kansas City, Kansas to get improvements to 47th Street and was successful in the project. He feels that consolidation must happen because that is the only way for local governments to save money.

For future activities, he feels that the swimming pool situation must be resolved, either by repair or by a new pool. (Ed. Note - The City has initiated action to build a new pool.) He feels that the public has historically supported and will support anything that is an improvement for the City. Mr. Shartzler feels that the City of Roeland Park will retain its values and will continue to be a viable community after some of our neighbors have begun to deteriorate.

John and Mark Shideler

John R. Shideler, and his wife Gertrude, moved into the house at 5213 Ash in July 1943. While not the original owners, Mr. Shideler believes they were the first occupants of the house. Mrs. Shideler passed away in 1995 and Mr. Shideler still lives there. Their son, Mark, grew up at that house but now lives in Long Island, New York. An older son, John L. Shideler lives in Yorktown, Virginia.

Mark Shideler says that his main recollections are of the times he spent at the Roeland Park swimming pool. He was on the City's swimming team from the time he was 12 years old until he left for college. During his college years he served as a life guard at the City's pool during the summers. He states that he got the job because of his inside influence from having been on the swimming team.

Mark recalls that one year Dick Clark brought the American Bandstand television program to the Roeland Park Pool. Mark and two friends opened the program with a swimming race that shows them coming in 1-2-3 within fractional seconds of each other. He also recalls the caves that were used as dressing rooms. He mentions that he was present in, he thinks, 1959 when a minor earth tremor knocked some stone from the caves ceilings.

Mark recalls that the City had a play ground in a vacant lot that faced north on Sycamore between Rosewood Drive and Alder. John Shideler comments that this area was used for a master septic tank, confirming the recollections of others, until the facilities were abandoned and sewers hooked to trunk sewers that served the community. Because houses could not be constructed over this septic tank, the surface was developed as a playground. After the facility was abandoned, houses were constructed.

Mark Shideler attended Roseland School, Roeland Park School, Skyline School, Old Mission Junior High School, and Shawnee-Mission North High School, graduating in 1965. One of his early memories is the first day of attendance at the Roeland Park School. He and a friend were concerned that they would be late and left quite early, walking to the school. They were so early, in fact, that when they arrived the school was still locked. Fortunately, a janitor appeared and let them in. Mark says he rode the bus thereafter.

Mark Shideler says that the teacher that had the most influence upon him was Mr. John Green who taught mathematics at Old Mission Junior High. Mark has no special recollection of activities in the City of Roeland Park. He recalls many of his contemporaries, some who still live in the City or nearby.

Mark Shideler feels that the experiences of his childhood and teen years in Roeland Park were quite typical of the times. Like his father, he is now a manufacturers representative and works out of his home on Long Island.

Judge and Mrs. Francis L. Smith

The Smiths purchased a home in Roe Highlands in September 1948, shortly after their marriage. At the time, Mr. Smith was working nights for the Santa Fe Railroad and going to school days. He received his undergraduate degree in 1952 and his law degree in 1954. At that time he was admitted to the bar and began his private law practice.

Later the Smiths moved to a house near 55th and Sherwood before moving to their present home at 5014 Reinhardt Street. The Smiths have six children who, variously, attended St. Agnes School, St. Pius School and Bishop Miege High School. All but one of the children still live in the Johnson County area.

In 1959, Wilbert S. Bales, a Roeland Park Councilman, asked Mr. Smith to run for the position of Municipal Judge. He was opposed by the incumbent Municipal Judge, Richard Southall. Mr. Southall was selected by a group that wanted to oust the existing council. This group, headed by James Cashin, submitted a slate of candidates, none of whom were elected. The winners included new Mayor Ostenberg and Judge Smith.

On one occasion Judge Smith was opposed for reelection. At the time there was no requirement that the judge be an attorney. His opposition was a salesman. Subsequently, this was changed, requiring the judge be an attorney and member of the Kansas bar. Judge Smith continued to be reelected and served as the City's Municipal Judge for 34 years until retiring in 1993.

Judge Smith recalls that he established a program applicable to juveniles. Instead of fines or jail, he imposed community service requirements. Then when a probationary period had passed, the record would be expunged. He also established a system of meetings or luncheons for other municipal judges, where common problems were discussed. He reports that these get-togethers were expanded to include City Attorneys. Eventually the program became quite structured, with officers and schedules, and Judge Smith withdrew.

Judge Smith recalls that at the time he first took office, he served as both prosecutor and judge. He felt this was wrong and requested the City Attorney to assist in the cases. He also recalls that in addition to traffic violations, he had to rule on minor criminal cases, including those related to theft and assault. While most cases resulted in fines, he states that some guilty defendants were jailed. When this happened, the City was required to provide the cost of subsistence and medical attention, something the City was reluctant to do.

Judge Smith recalls that at one time a program was proposed to eliminate municipal judges and replace them with a subordinated type of district judge. However, this failed when the larger communities of the State of Kansas objected. He states that as far as he knows, the City of Roeland Park is the only local community in Northeast Johnson County in which the municipal judge is still elected. He believes that all others are appointed. He feels that appointed judges are not totally independent and impartial, being subject to political interference. He expressed the hope that Roeland Park would continue with its present practices.

Mr. John L. Sullivan, Jr., Chairman, Mercantile Bank, 51st Terrace and Roe Avenue, Roeland Park, KS

Mr. Sullivan has been associated with banking in Roeland Park since 1958. He says that the first bank in the City was the Roeland Park State Bank. The Roeland Park State Bank had been organized and chartered by Walter Meyers, Theodore Meyers, Robert Osborne and Robert Vawter in 1952. Initially it was located on the corner of 51st and Linden Streets, in the northwest corner of

the main Roeland Park business building. The original incorporators were also associated with the Mission State Bank in Mission, Kansas and the Patrons Bank in Olathe, Kansas.

Reminiscing about the origins of the Roeland Park State Bank, Mr. Sullivan stated that an Olathe banker wanted a Federal Bank Charter and, using his Democratic Party affiliation, attempted to obtain it. Getting wind of this action, the Meyers and Mr. Osborne employed a Republican Party official, Mr. John Breyfogle, to file for a State of Kansas Charter. They were the first to complete the transaction and the Roeland Park State Bank was founded.

At the time, Mr. Sullivan was a representative of the Burroughs Business Machine Company. Mr. Walter Meyers approached him and offered to sell him the Roeland Park State Bank. Working with associates, Mr. Sullivan was able to complete this transaction in 1958. He has been in the banking business in Roeland Park since that time.

Mr. Sullivan reports that he was concerned about the parochial nature of the name of the bank. To entice metropolitan-wide business, the name of the bank was changed to the Mid American Bank in 1976. It retained that name until 1993 when the bank was acquired by the Mercantile Bank of Kansas.

Needing additional space, in 1966 the Roeland Park State Bank constructed its own building at 51st Terrace and Roe Avenue.

Reflecting on the businesses in the Roeland Park Shopping area, Mr. Sullivan reported that at the time he became active in the area, the building where the bank was located was owned by the James Kemper interests. He states that Mr. Victor Regnier purchased the property in 1966 or 1967, just before or just after the fire that severely damaged the main building. He states the Mr. Regnier rebuilt the structure.

Reminiscing, he recalls that it was shortly before the bank moved to the new building that he learned that the building in which the bank was located had open attic space, common to all the stores in the building. This was brought to his attention on the occasion of Max Cohen's need to get into his store, Marco's Mens Clothing. Mr. Cohen accomplished this by going into the attic space through the bank's rest room roof. Mr. Sullivan feels that the spread of the fire that damaged the building resulted from this common open attic space.

Reflecting on individuals in the Roeland Park shopping district, Mr. Sullivan mentioned Dr. Shulte, Mike Unrein and Bill Hiskey, who had an interest in the bowling alley, Max Cohen who had Marco's Mens Wear Store, a different Mr. Cohen who owned Arnold's Clothing, and Al Nickerpor who owned the hardware store. He mentioned the major influence of the Katz Drug Store, Watson's Standard Service, and Waji's Restaurant.

Mr. Sullivan believes that the Roeland Park business area is one of the prime areas in Johnson County. He feels that the future holds great promise because the area is accessible and has adequate parking.

Mrs. Ilie Talbert

Mrs. Talbert lives near 47th and Canterbury, Roeland Park, KS. Canterbury was originally known as Quapaw Street. Mrs. Talbert says that her parents purchased the house, as it was being constructed, in 1912. She says her residence was not continuous but that the family always came back to the house. At sometime or other the house was turned about 90 degrees from it's original facing.

The house has been remodeled from time to time. Mrs. Talbert was born near 5th and Cherry, in Kansas City, MO. Her family lived for a while in Mammoth Springs, AR and moved to the current home when she was seven years old. Her first school was in what is now a white house two house south of her home. At the time, it was a United Brethren Church. Grades to the 6th were taught there. Mrs. Talbert attended church at the building where she started school. Later the church moved to a "little white building" on the Wyandotte County side of 47th Street. It stayed there until they moved to the 51st and Cedar church.

The big two story house on Quapaw was there before 1912. There were no houses on the east side of Quapaw. There were no utilities. Water was saved in a cistern. Gas was available south of the

Strang Line but was not extended to the north. Mrs. Talbert says she wasn't very old when electricity became available. But the original lights were merely "drop lights" that "we thought were wonderful."

After several moves, Mrs. Talbert and her first husband moved back to the Quapaw house. Mrs. Talbert's grandmother lived two streets west and on the corner of 48th Street. She remembers that her grandmother had gas light that we, too, thought were "Wonderful."

Mrs. Talbert raised a family, had grandchildren and, with her third husband, took care of foster children for twenty years. She recalls that a teacher, Miss Briggs, who had taught her, was still teaching when her children attended Roseland School. Mrs. Talbert never attended high school.

Mrs. Talbert has no special recollection of specific experiences or event during her life. The house was in the Beers' Addition and was probably the last house that Beers built in the addition. At the time, 47th Street was a dirt road and much steeper than it is now. Two streets to the west is an old brick home that Mrs. Talbert seemed to think had been occupied by a family named Metzger or Metzler. She states that on snowy, winter days, folks, both children and adults, would coast down the 47th Street hill and almost to the top of the next hill where a fire was usually built.

Mrs. Talbert says that she and her father would walk to 45th and State Line to catch a street car. She does not recall using the Strang Line. She went to school with Bill Schleicher who was called "Big Shorty" because he was so tall. She also attended school with Leo Schleicher. She bought groceries at Pick Henry's grocery which was the first building on the west side of Mission Road at 47th Street. It is one of the oldest buildings in the area. She recalls "going up that hill, many a time" to get groceries. She recalls that it was cool in the store and that they oiled the floor.

Before the grocery was available, her family purchased groceries from a store at 43rd and Lloyd which was run by the Suter family. A man would come through the area on horseback and take orders. Then that afternoon he would deliver the groceries from a spring wagon. Her family kept a chicken yard at the house. Later on, she and her husband kept a cow in a field northeast of 47th and Mission Road. Later they rented 10 acres on Mission Road and kept cows and a horse. They also had a garden on the east side of Mission Road, south of 47th.

Mrs. Talbert remembers that the Strang Line had a stop at Ouchita Street which was called the Shawnee Place station. The next stop was near the Roesland School. In the first year the school was opened, the Strang Line kept a car on a siding near the Shawnee Place station and took the children to school. After that, they had to pay the fare or walk. When they walked, they used the Strang Line right of way, generally along what is now 48th Street.

Mrs. Michael Unrein

For the eight years prior to the demolition of the building in 1991, Mrs. Harriet Unrein was the owner, operator of the Roe Bowl. She and her husband, Michael Unrein, and a partner, Tom Mattox, acquired the Roe Bowl from Bill Hiskey and Marvin Miller in 1973 or 1974. Subsequently, the Unreins bought out the Mattox interest.

Mrs. Unrein believes that Charles Sanches was the original owner of the Roe Bowl which opened in 1949. She recalls that during the winter months, the Roe Bowl had two leagues every night, Monday through Friday. They also had women's leagues in the day time and children's leagues after school and on Saturdays.

Mrs. Unrein recalls that every year there were a few "300" games at the Roe Bowl. She says that a bowling supply store was adjacent to and connected with the Roe Bowl. Earlier, she believes, that there was a restaurant in that space. She says that there were pool and snooker tables in the area in front of the bowling lanes, but that these were gradually removed.

When asked to name some outstanding bowlers, Mrs. Unrein said that there were many. But she does recall George Hoagland, who at 80 years plus, is still carrying a high average, and seems to be improving.

Mr. Robert Vawter

The son of Charles E. Vawter, the Developer of Roeland Park

Mr. Robert Vawter states the name "Roeland Park" was selected by his father, Charles E. Vawter, for his subdivisions of Roeland Park, Roe Highlands and Roe Manor Heights. It was selected to honor the memory of John Roe and his children. Mr. Vawter purchased much of the land on which he built from Miss Isabella and Miss Margaret Roe, two of John Roe's daughters.

Robert Vawter says that construction of homes in Roeland Park began in 1937. The first homes constructed were located on the east side of Nall Avenue and between 51st Street and 55th Street. The first house completed was either the second or third house south of 51st Street. Initially all construction was on already dedicated streets.

Houses were also constructed on 51st Street about the time of the start of World War II. They were built on slabs. Mr. Vawter was permitted to acquire materials to complete these houses so that they could be occupied by "war workers." The houses were rented at first and were not sold until after the end of World War II.

The Roeland Park Shopping Center was begun in 1948 with the bowling alley building constructed first. Subsequently, an addition was placed on this building. The addition housed shops and offices. The offices were on the second floor and the Vawter Construction Company's office was eventually located there. Others were offices of a Dr. Shulte and Dr. Guy Dennis, a Dentist. Shops were occupied in 1950.

At about the same time the building at 51st and Roe was completed. Later the building that housed the Katz Drug Co. and later Skaggs and Osco, was completed. About the time of the Korean War, excavation occurred for a building that was to be occupied by Peck's Department Store. Building materials became scarce and this building was never completed. Later, when materials did become available, Pecks had been acquired by Allied Department Stores who declined to have the building finished. It remained as a foundation for several years before the hole was filled in.

Robert Vawter recalls that his father acquired land from the Roe sisters in a very informal way. Much of the land that was sold to Mr. Vawter was purchased with just a hand shake. Over time this method was used to acquire essentially all of the land between Johnson Drive and 49th Street, and Roe and Nall Avenues.

The Vawter offices were originally at 55th and Roe. The building on the northwest side of the street was the business office and the building on the south side of the street was the construction office. A warehouse was located behind the business office. Mr. Robert Vawter states that the gate, that is often referred to as closing 55th Street, was merely a gate to these buildings and that 55th Street was just a stub. He does not recall that any of the land south of 55th Street was a dairy or used to pasture cattle, although others have stated that this occurred. He had a picture of a small tractor that he used. A small building shown in the picture was used to store plumbing fixtures and materials. The background to this picture was just an open field looking south and west.

After the death of Charles E. Vawter, on May 17, 1954 at age 55, Robert Vawter continued to operate the business. He completed the development of the Roeland Park subdivisions and other areas that Charles E. Vawter had begun. Since that time, he has remained in the building business and is now semi-retired.

Mr. Robert Wendel

In an interview, Mr. Wendel discussed recollections of his years of service on the City's council. Mr. Wendel stated that he considered the most significant event, affecting the City of Roeland Park, was the adoption of a sales tax. The tax was imposed in three increments at different times. The proceeds of the first tax of 1/2 of 1 percent was reserved for improvements to the curbs, gutters and streets of the City. The proceeds of the second increment of 2/10s of 1 percent were reserved for

the acquisition, operation and major maintenance of the Roeland Park Community Center (the former Skyline School). Proceeds from the third increment of 3/10ths of 1 percent, and the incremental increases in the other elements of the sales tax are to be used for the Enterprise Zone financing of the City's business district, sometimes called the Pace or Sams building, and as this is being written, soon to be occupied by Wal Mart stores. It also was to cover costs in the Venture Plaza area. Mr. Wendel pointed out that before these monies became available, the City was unable to accomplish much in developing and maintaining the City's infrastructure.

Mr. Wendel stated that the purchase of the Community Center was a major event for the City. The building and grounds were purchased from School District No. 512 for about \$200,000, payable at the rate of \$20,000 per year, with no interest. The Community Center is operated by the Johnson County Department of Human Resources. The City pays the Department \$20,000 per year for this service. Human Resources pay minor maintenance and the City pays for major maintenance.

When asked whom he considered some of the more influential citizens of the City, Mr. Wendel mentioned Mayor Shartzler, Judge Francis Smith, Mrs. Judy Katz, Bill Gleason, Norman Garr, Larry Bridges, and Bonjour Engineering.

In discussing matters that happened, or failed to happen, Mr. Wendel expects there will be a merger of smaller Johnson County cities in the next few years. The City should have handled the Fred Cross controversy in a different manner, but he did not specify just how, except he believes the Council should have asked for Cross' resignation earlier than they did. He mentioned that the City's personnel system needs review and standardization. And he states that enforcement of the City's codes is not uniformly handled. What is fair for one should be fair for all, Mr. Wendel stated. Similarly he feels the City should adopt a standard practice for recruiting new business.

Old Mission Golf Course

Following publication of an article in the Fall, 1995 issue of the "Roeland Parker," several telephone conversations were held with various individuals about the Old Mission Golf Course. The following is a summary of these and other conversations.

Mr. Earl D. Clark, 5001 Reinhardt Drive wrote. He is searching for the layout of the Old Mission Golf Course. He believes that his home is located about where the 17th green might have been located. He recalls that when his home was being constructed, the remnants of a green were found. (*Ed. Note-* An estimated diagram of the course was developed with Mr. Ray Carter. It is presented at the end of Chapter 8 of this history.)

Mr. Jerry Harper, 5031 Nall Avenue stated that he played the Old Mission Course during the war years. Service men located in Kansas City could play free. Later, he purchased his present home because it was close to the course. He worked for the Post Office on the night shift. He would return home, have breakfast, then play the course until time to return home and go to bed. Harper does not have a diagram of the course. He recalls that one green was very near the corner of 53d and Neosho and if you weren't careful, you would hit out of bounds into one or the other of the two streets.

Mr. Kenneth Krakauer, of Kansas City, MO was contacted. He has written a book, "When golf came to Kansas City." It has pictures showing the club house which was located near 48th and Reinhardt Streets. Mr. Krakauer reports that a newspaper article of December 1, 1929 included a story that Mr. Bill Wotherspoon, a golf professional, had been named president of the Roe Golf Company. The story included a reference to the course having 27 holes and was to be opened for play by April 1, 1930.

Mr. Krakauer states that the course was famous for it's very fine, irrigated, bent grass greens. However he recalls that the fairways were not watered, were extremely hard and, in dry weather, often had big cracks. He recalls that, during one period in the mid 1930s, the temperature exceeded 100 degrees every day for 30 days. He recalls that the course was not particularly difficult to play. He says that in 1943 the Kansas City Medal Play championship was held on the course.

Mr. William Roberts of 4904 Pawnee Drive recalls playing the Old Mission Golf Course. He provided a score card of the course as it existed in 1947. He had retained the score card because it recorded the only "eagle," two under par, that he ever made.

Using Mr. Robert's score card, Ray Carter, 4126 W 54th Terrace, assisted the author in preparing the diagram of the Old Mission Golf Course shown at the end of Chapter 8. Mr. Carter does not believe that the Roe family sold the golf course land to the Old Mission Golf Course. He thinks it might have been leased. He stated that there were slot machines in the lobby of the club house until one year when a new sheriff was elected in Johnson County. The slots were then moved to the locker room. He says that out on the course was a concession stand, called the Grotto, where high stakes card games were played.

John Ziegelmeyer, 4905 Howe, says his home was where the 6th fairway was located at the Old Mission Golf Course. He recalls that George Gooch and Jug McSpaden, later a professional golfer and the owner of the Dubs Dread Golf Club, played on the Old Mission Course as members of the Rosedale High School golf team. Robert Blake, 3608 West 53d, says that there were tee boxes in some willow trees when he moved into his home. And Ms. Virginia Bowden , 5100 Fontana, says that when she was 14 years old she worked in the kitchen at the Old Mission Golf Course.

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