

Reflections on Carondelet

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Spring, 2007

It has been over 130 years since the "City" of Carondelet was absorbed by the City of St. Louis, but the "Great Seal of the City of Carondelet" still hangs from light posts and telephone poles throughout the area. It was first settled by a fellow named Delor (thus the street that bears his name). The names of other prominent villagers names live on in this manner: Krauss Street, Primm Avenue, Loughborough, Steins, and Ivory are but a few.

And although the oldest part of Carondelet has been "separated" from the western portion by Highway 55, it continues to have a flavor all its own, where small businesses, isolated like the animals of the Galapagos Islands, survive from generation to generation.

These include:

- South Public Market (Built in the 1870s and still selling foodstuffs).
- RE Source / Hammel Realty operating from its century-old building on Broadway. Hammel opened its doors in the 1860s.
- Rathbone Hardware, still in the family 100 years later.
- Advantage / Hoffmeister Mortuary, the oldest funeral home in St. Louis which started out as a livery stable.
- Southern Commercial Bank, independent since 1891.
- Carondelet Bakery, St. Louis' oldest bakery, since 1875
- Wicker's Barber Shop, the oldest in town where hair has been cut since the 1800s.
- Your Corner Market on Michigan, a neighborhood market since 1889.
- Rex's Café, founded in the 1930s.
- 2 diners (Riverside and Wimpy's) thriving under the nose of the fast food giants.
- Southern Floral Shop, a small independent florist for over 80 years.
- Big Bill Auto Body, which started out as a blacksmith shop.

- Kleb's Clothing, purveyor of blue jeans and work shirts that looks like something out of a museum, still operated by the Klebs.
- The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, a massive 19th century brick and stone complex that sits high on a hill and looks like an ancient fortress.
- Carondelet Historical Society, formerly Des Peres School, where America's first kindergarten was started.

Neighborhood saloons and eateries make the area a bastion of the corner bar: Skips, Too, Kicker's Corner, Kickers, Tuckers, Red's 8th Inning, Slo Tom's The Iron Horse, Pooh's Corner, The Bulltadpole, The Club Paladora, The Haven, Garavalia's Hill Top Tavern, The Bungalow and Kathleen's is only a partial list. Kathleen's serves that quirky south side favorite, the brain sandwich.

The area also boasts residents east of Broadway, some living in houses constructed of stone hewn from the bluffs of the Mississippi and among the oldest in St. Louis (including Jacob Steins house and saloon, just down the street from the old Klausmann Brewery). Mayor Raymond Tucker was a prominent resident of the area, and the legendary Albert "Red" Villa has a bronze bust in his honor in a park known as the Ivory Triangle. The statue depicts him wielding his ever-present cigar. An original trough for watering horses has been converted into a fountain at the triangle's north end.

There's more, of course, when you visit the "village" of Carondelet.