

# Brief History of Highland Park 1890-1989

The original Highland Park Corporation was formed in 1871 but did not see implementation until 1890. The area consisted of Oakdale, Wilder Park, Ashton and Beechmont. The Kentucky General Assembly Act of Incorporation approved in May 14, 1890, made it officially a city.

All the land embraced within a rectangle. One mile wide and one and three fourths long. The center point being the L&N RR right of way—now Louisville Avenue. South & north of the Highland Park railway station, located between Mohawk Avenue and Ottawa on the west side of 4400 block of Louisville Avenue - extending 1/8 mile south & one mile and 1/8 north. Extending 1/2 mile east & 1/2 mile west from station. The divisions of streets were Louisville Avenue and Highland Boulevard (Adair St.) present location of Watterson Expressway, extending east to Central Plank Road (now 3rd St.) west to about the present location of Emerson Ave. Remained said town until March 1922. The city of Louisville annexed the area against the will of the people, after a 5 year fight finally decided by the Supreme Court.

The original farm land was owned by Gideon Walker, Rich Christmas, D. Phillips & heirs, J. M. Harding, Kargis family, Murray Phillips, Henry Phillips & Richard Phillips. This land was developed by the Vance Land Co.

Lots \$125.00 and upward. Lots 25 feet wide, with depth varying from 125 feet. Corner lots 32½ feet wide. Payments were \$10.00 down and \$1.00 per week.

Street & Alley layouts were as follows:

Park Blvd. 60 feet wide

Highland Blvd. 60 feet wide

Louisville Ave. 140 feet wide

All other streets 50 feet wide

Alleys 15 feet wide

The streets, alleys and sewers were paid for by the owners of property in Highland Park.

Highland Park a new residential and manufacturing suburb had enough beautiful high land to build a city of 20,000 people.

Upon receipt of the first down payment, bond was issued for the deed and the lot became absolutely the purchasers property with no interest or taxes until the lot was paid for. The title to all this property was perfect, being insured by the Kentucky Title Company.

Building on the lot could be made after making the first down payment. Water could be had from the City of Louisville Water mains or you could dig a well to 40 feet and get water, cleanest and purest. A free public school was opened with a competent teacher. The first school was in the 300 block of Saginaw. The West Side School was then built and later, in the late teens, the East Side School (now James Russell Lowell) was built. These schools and St. Leos provided the educational needs of the city of Highland Park.

In 1909 and few years later, the H.P. Christian Church-Baptist Church-Methodist Church-and St. Leo the Great Churches were built.

The early businesses that came in to being were groceries (Dawsons - Swartz -Ruckriegel - Kusteses - Edlins - Thomases) Baynes Hardware, Tuggles Confectionary, Silks Drug Store, Decourseys & Wrights Dry Goods. Rodmans, McDaniel Funeral Home, Gerber & Taylor Furniture Store. The Highland Park Bank, Highland Park Post Office. Kuhn and Johns Saloons on Louisville Avenue. Highland Park Fire Department, Highland Park Jail and Judges Office.

Early industrial sights were L&N RR, Gamble Bros., Louisville Fire Brick Works, Louisville Axe and Tool, Wood Mosaic and several others.

Early recreation facilities were Thornberry Grove, also called Twin Oak Park and later called The Highland Park Community Center, and there was also the Douglas Park Race Track.

The city of Highland Park continued to grow from 195 families in 1894 — 297 families in 1896 — 322 families in 1900.

The people of Highland Park built a thriving neighborhood and in 1916 Remount and Camp Taylor came into being and the city of Louisville in 1917 began their efforts to annex the area, even though the people rose up to fight against it. They waged a five year resistance and only then through a Supreme Court decision they became a part of the city of Louisville.

This was the beginning of the end. The home owners were then forced to pay for the paving of streets and alleys — and additional trunks into the sewer networks, also driving up the cost of people homes. Many lost their homes because of this maneuver and the depression in the thirties. Residents were forced to take loans on their homes to build the streets, alleys and sewer lines.

World War II carried us through the 1940's. With industries locating in our vicinity, booming into maximum growth in prosperity and businesses and home ownership.

Then came the Boombshell. The obsolete I-264 Expressway was first started in 1950, taking some of the best homes and our main street connecting from Emerson Avenue to Third Street. They were not satisfied and now they are destroying more homes. In 1950's and 60's the Fairground, Airport and I-65 have come into being —destroying our right to pursuit of happiness by creating an area of the worst air and noise pollution in the state of Kentucky. Now the powers that be have beaten us to the ground and now they want to steal our homes, like they stole our city in 1922.

They say it's necessary for progress. Let the ones who will reap the windfall at the people's expense pay for it. It's valuable land and the prices have gone up. We don't want to sell at any price. We love our homes even though subsidized people have been moved into our area.

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