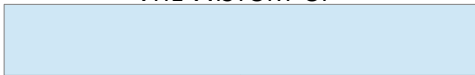



THE HISTORY OF

SOULARD
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

The Soulard neighborhood is located on the old St. Louis Common Fields south of the early village of St. Louis. The area was settled by Frenchmen and Americans shortly after the establishment of the City of St. Louis in 1764. Antoine Soulard, a descendent of a noble family exiled from France, journeyed to St. Louis before 1770. Sometime prior to 1780, Antoine Soulard established a fruit farm near the present Park and Chouteau avenues. Following Soulard's death in 1825, his wife, Julia Cerre Soulard, combined the Soulard estate with her own family holdings which covered a larger area from present Park Avenue to Carondelet. Upon her death, Julia Cerre Soulard willed two acres of her land to the City of St. Louis for the creation of a permanent marketplace.

Following an act of the Missouri General Assembly in 1835, the St. Louis Commons were subdivided into individual homesteads and in 1841 the southwestern city limit was moved from 7th and Rutger to a point twenty blocks south and seven blocks west. The city limits of 1841 included the entire present Soulard neighborhood and, with urbanization encroaching, various Soulard landowners hired surveyors to stake out streets, alleys and sellable lots, continuing the traditional urban grid.

After political upheavals in Germany and Bohemia (now Czechoslovakia) in 1848, a great influx of immigrants from those countries found their way to St. Louis. These immigrants founded and staffed the breweries which became one of St. Louis' principal industries, including Eberhard Anheuser's Bavarian Brewery (1860) and Adam Lemp's Western Brewery (1842). One of the first German language daily newspapers was printed here in the 1850s and subsequently Joseph Pulitzer published the St. Louis Westliche Post along with his St. Louis Post-Dispatch, providing a gateway as German immigrants adopted English and switched their loyalty to English-language newspapers. Institutions such as St. Peter and Paul German Catholic Church (1853), St. John Nepomuk (1855), and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (1865) were also founded to serve the increasing immigrant population in the Soulard neighborhood.^{123 45}

One of the first additions to St. Louis west of the 1822 city limits was the John B. C. Lucas subdivision of 1833. In its street layout, the next parallel street west of Seventh Street was designated as Eighth Street. This street's southern extension into Soulard was known as Fulton Street until 1883.⁶

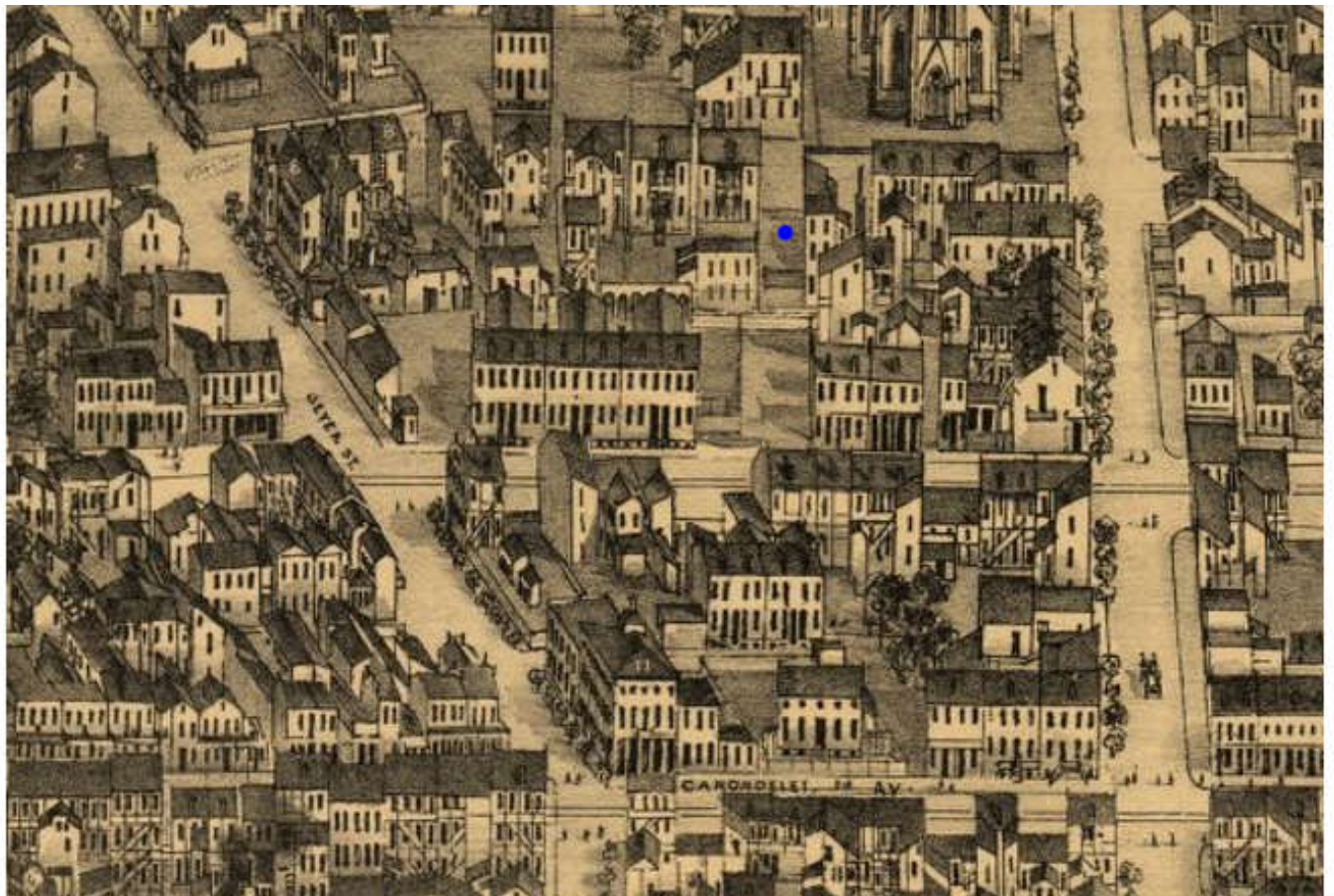
Julia Cerre Soulard's second addition was platted on June 21, 1838. It included the area from Carondelet Ave. to Decatur St., between Park and Geyer Avenues. The current location of Soulard market was in this addition. Following Julia's death in 1845, her son Benjamin took ownership of the land and continued to subdivide it into saleable lots. He sold the property now known as  to Henry C. Becker on July 18, 1848 for the sum in trust of \$441.50.

Henry (also known as Heinrich) Becker was born in Germany around 1815 and immigrated to St. Louis before 1840. He married Mary Lasamann, another German immigrant and their sons Henry and Louis were born in 1843 and 1847 respectively. It is probable that Henry was a police officer during these early years as there is a Henry Becker listed as a policeman living on the corner of Fulton and Lafayette in the 1854 City Directory, and a Heinrich C. Becker listed as a policeman living on the alley between 7th and Fulton, Geyer and Lafayette in the 1857 City Directory. (8th Street was known as Fulton at that time). It can be assumed

that the first structures at [redacted] were built around this time, perhaps between the dates of 1854 and 1857.

By 1860, Henry Becker had changed occupations, as he was listed in the 1860 Kennedy's City Directory as a brick maker residing in the alley between Fulton and 7th. He and his family were also listed in the 1860 census, his occupation being brickyard owner. His family had grown in size to include three more children, George Christian born in 1849, Julia Louise born in 1856, and Julius born in 1858.⁷

Henry Sr. died March 21, 1870 at the age of 55, leaving his widow and 6 children ownership of [redacted] (another son Frank being born in 1862). The 1870 Census shows widow Mary and her children, Henry, a stove moulder, Louis, George, Julia, Julius and Frank at the property.⁸ There were several more structures added to the property in the 1870's, as shown by the documentation of the 1875 Compton & Dry map and the 1876 Whipple Fire Insurance map. (shown below, property marked in blue)



Compton & Dry 1875

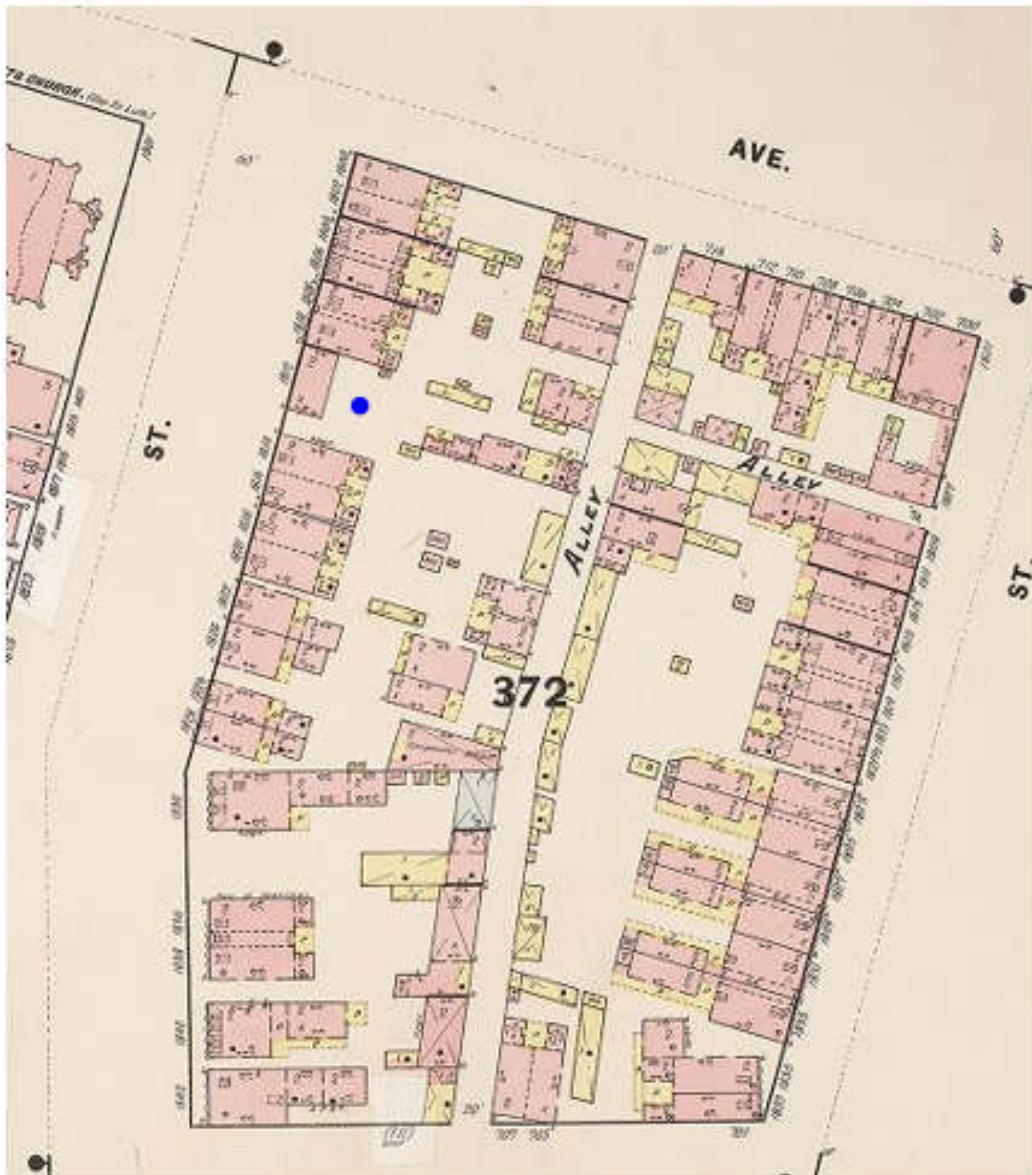


Whipple 1876

The Becker family used the multiple dwellings on their property as rental income, as evidenced by the 1880 Census records. There were five occupancy listings at [redacted] – widow Mary living with her children Julia, Julius and Frank; her eldest son Henry living with his wife Mary and children Mary, Kady and Julius; tenant John Hein, a German blacksmith, his wife Amalie and their children Eugene and Bertha; tenant August Rone, laborer and his wife Lizzie; tenant Maria Kehel, a widowed Russian washerwoman, and her children Ida, Adolf, Otto and Anna.⁹

There is no 1890 Census, but it can be inferred that Widow Mary, with her sons Henry and his family, Julius and George, and daughter Julia, resided at [redacted] during that time by their listing in the 1887 City Directory. They continued to supplement their income by renting out rooms, as evidenced by the 1900 Census.

Tenants William Jetz, a bookbinder, his wife Mamie and their daughter Lizzie along with John Schulte, a stove collar maker, his wife Margaret and their children Rosa, a candy dipper, Valentine and Edna, and Laura Ginsburg, a German immigrant, rented from the Beckers at [redacted] in 1900. Widow Mary Becker, her daughter Julia and son George, a stove moulder, lived in another unit, while eldest son Henry Becker, listed as a coal dealer, his wife Mary, and their children Julius, a fisherman, and George lived in another. Mary's son Julius, a stove moulder, also lived at the property.¹⁰



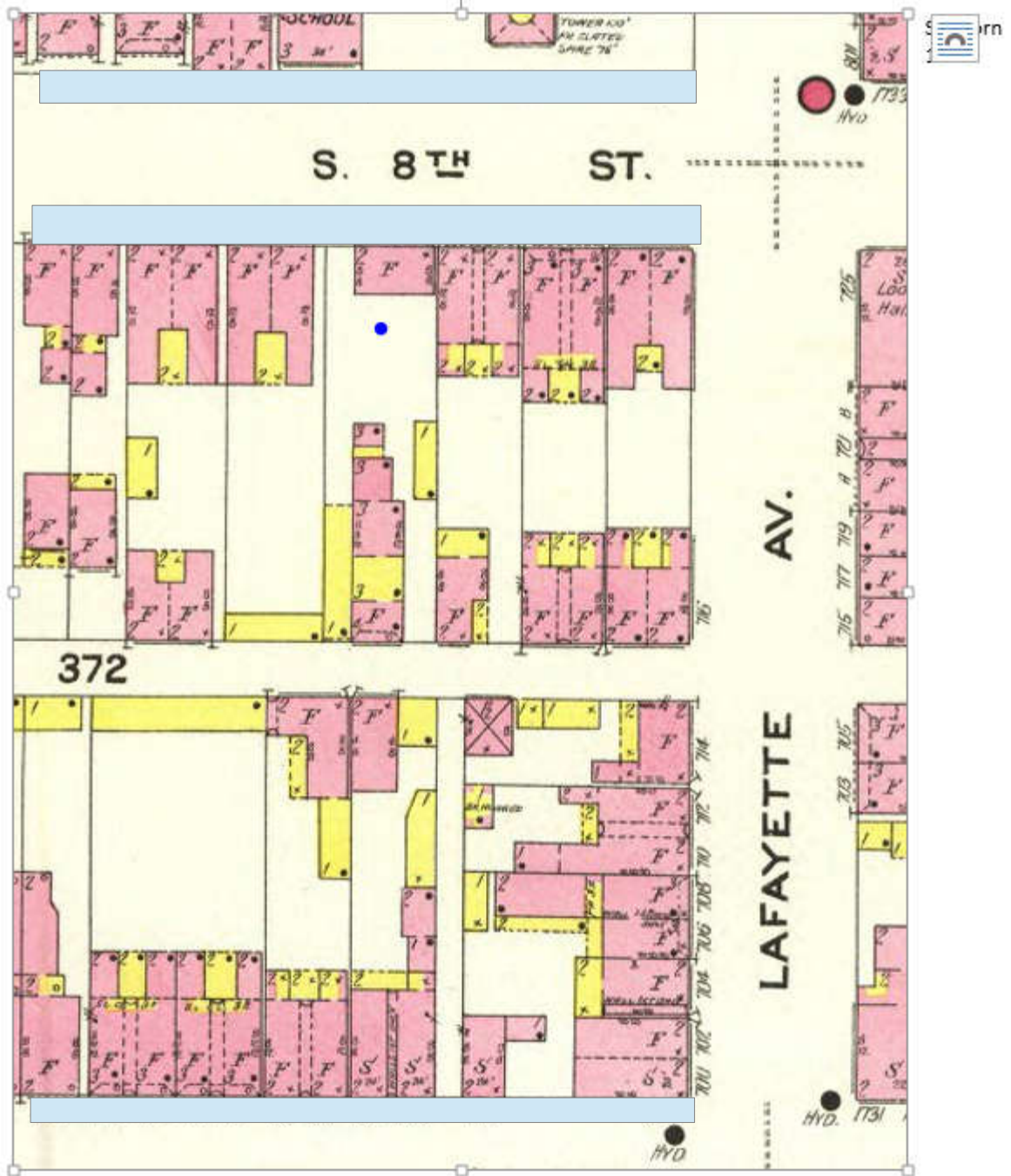
Whipple 1897

The Beckers seemed to care about their tenants, as in this 30 November 1897 Post-Dispatch article describing a fundraising effort to bury the children of one of their renters.

<h1>CAN'T BURY THEIR DEAD</h1>	<p>the same remedy, she was put to bed. Within the next twenty-four hours the remaining five children made complaint of their throats. After these were put to bed George began to wonder at the strangeness of the malady. Being destitute, he could summon no doctor. Patiently he watched for improvement, but no signs were visible. Thanksgiving eve came and he was sitting by the bedside of his daughter Tracy. Her breathing was thick and hard and as she lay seemingly asleep there came a gasp for breath, and in a few moments her young life had flown. The parents were heartbroken.</p>
<p>MR. AND MRS. SURLINE WITHOUT FOOD AND FIVE CHILDREN DOWN WITH DIPHTHERIA.</p>	<p>The little lifeless form was laid carefully upon the floor. The father had not a cent with which to bury the loved one. He appealed for aid to Mrs. Julia Beck, who lives on the first floor at 1812 South Eighth street. Mrs. Beck went around among her acquaintances and raised enough money to give the child a decent burial.</p>
<h2>TWO BURIED BY CHARITY.</h2>	<p>The child was buried on the morning of Thanksgiving day. Its father was the only mourner present at the grave. Mrs. Surline staid at home to care for the six little ones, all of whom were crowded into two beds. Meanwhile their cases were diagnosed and proved to be diphtheria.</p>
<p>Deserving, the Husband Unable to Procure Work, Must See Loved Ones Die Unattended.</p>	<p>The father never once thought that this violent disease had attacked his children. The days rolled on slowly and Saturday night his 5-year-old daughter, Annie, who was the second to take sick, expired before his eyes. Almost frantic, Surline made another appeal to Mrs. Beck to aid him in burying another loved one. Another collection was taken up and this one was buried Monday afternoon without ceremonies, attended only by its mother. Now there are five children remaining, all hovering between life and death.</p>
<p>With sorrow planted deeply in the furrows of her careworn face, Mrs. Mary Surline has sat beside the beds of her sick children in a gloomy little room in the rear of [redacted] Eighth street since the first child was taken sick, ten days ago.</p>	<p>The watchful and loving parents sleep but occasionally and eat whenever a kind neighbor brings them food. They are half-starved and exhausted for want of sleep.</p>
<p>Mrs. Surline, her husband, George, and seven little children, ranging in ages from 1 month to 14 years, moved into the squalid apartments they now occupy shortly after the tornado. George was then at work as a laborer. He lost his position a month ago. Since then misfortunes have come upon him. Ten days ago his 12-year-old daughter Tracy complained of having a headache and a sore throat. Her father thought that it was nothing more than a cold. He saturated a rag with coal oil from a half-filled lamp and tied the rag about her throat. The child complained of feeling dull and stupid and was put to bed. Two days later the daughter Annie, 5 years old, also got a sore throat and the father, applying the same remedy, she was put to bed.</p>	

Ownership of [redacted] continued in the Becker family after the passing of Matriarch Mary in 1908.¹¹ In 1910, Eldest son Henry, listed as working at a stove foundry, his wife Mary and their sons Julius, a hammer man at a rolling mill, and George, a plumber resided at [redacted] Henry's brother George, an iron moulder, brother Julius, a stove moulder and sister Julia also lived there. At the time of the census, the Beckers rented to tenants Matthew Wendling, a maltster at a brewery, his wife Marquette, and their daughters Marie and Magdalena; Peter Branigan, a plumber; John Jaeger, a tallow factory worker, his wife Mary and their children Jacob, Katherine and Anna; Peter Schmidt, a wagon washer, his wife Barbara and their daughters Barbara and Johanna; Nicholas Schoar, a laborer, his wife Adela and daughter Marie; and Frederika Emerly with her seamstress daughter Annie Cook.¹²

1909 Sanborn Fire Map



The next decade saw some major changes for the Becker family. Uncle Julius found love in his 50s and married Anna (probably in 1912 as that is when he gave up his co-ownership of [redacted]¹³) then moved nearby on Russell Avenue.¹⁴ Uncle George passed away in January 1917, followed by his brother Henry in March of the same year.¹⁵ Ownership of [redacted] was transferred to George Becker following the death of his father Henry.¹⁶ George had married Louise Busse around 1916, then moved his new family into the residence and built additions onto the tenements shortly after.¹⁷ George's brother Julius was murdered in

1919, but his attackers were later acquitted of the crime. (articles from 1919 editions of Post-Dispatch) (death certificates enclosed)

FIVE ARRESTED FOLLOWING DEATH OF MAN HIT WITH OAR

Four Released as Witnesses and Fifth
Held for Coroner's
Investigation.

Following the death at the city hospital last night of Julius Becker, 45 years old, a laborer, of [redacted] Eighth street, the police arrested Charles Vaughn, 25 years old, 2453 De Kalb street, and four other men. Vaughn was ordered held for the Coroner and the others were released on bond as witnesses.

Becker was found unconscious at 9 o'clock Sunday night on a lumber pile at the foot of Barton street. The police learned that he had been across the river with Vaughn and four others and that the party returned to St. Louis in a skiff. When the boat reached Victor street Becker, who was sitting in the bow, refused to get up, and Vaughn, the police were told, hit him on the head with an oar.

When questioned about the alleged assault, Vaughn told the police that he did not strike Becker but merely pushed him aside with the oar.

MAN WHO HIT COMPANION WITH AN OAR IS ACQUITTED BY JURY

Defendant Claimed Self-Defense in
Affair on Rowboat Last
June.

Charles Vaughn, 26 years old, 2453 De Kalb street, was found not guilty by a jury in Circuit Judge Taylor's court where he was tried yesterday afternoon on a charge of fourth degree manslaughter. It was alleged that Vaughn was criminally responsible for the death of Julius Becker, 45 years old, [redacted] South Eighth street, whose skull was fractured June 29 last when Vaughn hit him on the head with an oar.

Vaughn, Becker and several other men were returning in a skiff from a fishing trip on the East Side. Vaughn testified that on the trip across the Mississippi River Becker repeatedly rocked the boat, and when the skiff arrived at Barton street Becker prevented the others from landing by pushing the craft away from a barge several times. Vaughn said that he ordered Becker to "cut it out" and that Becker picked up an oar and attempted to strike him. He then picked up the other oar, he said, and in self-defense struck Becker on the head. The jury found that Vaughn acted in self-defense.

Strangely, Julia Becker is unlisted in the 1920 Census, but is listed as residing at [redacted] in the 1921 Gould's City Directory. Tenants of 1812 S. 8th in 1920 included all Hungarian immigrants: Matthias Bergauer, an iron worker at the stove foundry, his wife Katherine and children Barbara and Christopher; John and Gertrude Amann; John and Annie Grauff; and Peter Williams, his wife Katherine and their son John.¹⁸ The youngest uncle, Frank, who had been a patient at the St. Louis Sanitarium since 1910, died of tuberculosis in 1922.¹⁹ (death certificate enclosed)

Aunt Julia Becker, aged 71, continued to reside at [redacted] along with her nephew George, a plumber, his wife Louise and their children Louise, Emma, George Jr., and Norman. Tenants in 1930 included Frank Zickers, a Syrian immigrant, his wife Elizabeth and their daughter Lillian, and August Kern, a bottler for a syrup manufacturing company.²⁰ Julia Becker passed away in 1932 on the day after Christmas.²¹ (death certificate enclosed) She had lived at [redacted] for 76 years.

The George Becker family remained at [redacted] - the 1940 Census lists George, a plumber, his wife Louise, daughters Louise and Emma, a handworker at an envelope company, and sons George Jr., a plumber helper, Norman and Oliver. Tenants included August Kern (same from 1930), widow Bertha Hatton and her daughter Dorothy, and Lillian Arthur, a checker at a shoe company.²² The 1945 City Directory has George, Louise, Emma and George Jr. listed at [redacted] as well. George repaired one of the frame sheds on the property in 1951 at a cost of \$400.²³ In the 1952 City Directory, George is listed as a plumber, George Jr. is working at Silverblatt Real Estate Company, Louise is a clerk at Kroger's, Emma works at the St. Louis Cordage Mills and Norman is a clerk at Scrugg's – all residing at [redacted]

George and Louise Becker still are listed as living at [redacted] in the 1960 City Directory. Only 3 of their children still resided with them – Louise, a clerk at Kroger's, Norman, a salesman at Lane Bryant, and Oliver, a wrecker at Riverside Auto Parts. The old alley house at the rear of the property was demolished in 1963 and a garage was built on top of the foundation, to be repaired a few years later.²⁴

Louise Busse Becker passed away in April 1970 followed by her husband George in 1982.²⁵ Ownership of



- 1 U.S. Dept. of the Interior. "Soulard Neighborhood Historic District." *National Register of Historic Places* (1972): Web.
- 2 Lossos, David. "Early (pre 1900) St. Louis Places of Worship." Genealogy in St. Louis., 12 Sept. 2007. Web.
- 3 Wayman, Norbury L. *History of St. Louis Neighborhoods*. St. Louis CDA. 1981.
- 4 Encyclopedia of Immigration. "German American Press." *Immigration Online*. 2011. Web.
- 5 "Our history." *Sts Peter and Paul Catholic Church*. Web.
- 6 Holt and Pearson. *St. Louis Street Index*. St. Louis Public Library. 1994.
- 7 1860 US Census. St Louis Missouri. Ward 1.
- 8 1870 US Census. St Louis Missouri. Ward2.
- 9 1880 US Census. St Louis Missouri. ED#099.
- 10 1900 US Census. St Louis Missouri. ED#120.
- 11 Assessor's Office. St Louis City Hall.
- 12 1910 US Census. St Louis Missouri. ED#132.
- 13 Assessor's Office. St Louis City Hall.
- 14 1920 US Census. St Louis Missouri. ED#166.
- 15 Certificate of Death. Missouri State Archives.
- 16 Assessor's Office. St Louis City Hall.
- 17 *Inactive Building Permits*. Records Retention. St Louis City Hall.
- 18 1920 US Census. St Louis Missouri. ED#151.
- 19 Certificate of Death. Missouri State Archives.
- 20 1930 US Census. St Louis Missouri. ED#396.
- 21 Certificate of Death. Missouri State Archives.
- 22 1940 US Census. St Louis Missouri. ED#96-179.
- 23 *Active Building Permits*. Records Retention. St Louis City Hall.
- 24 *Active Building Permits*. Records Retention. St Louis City Hall.
- 25 "Louise Becker (1887 - 1970) - Find A Grave Memorial." Web. <<http://www.findagrave.com>>.
- 26 Assessor's Office. St Louis City Hall.
- 27 Personal communication. Jay Gibbs. 2015.
- 28 Assessor's Office. St Louis City Hall.