

Chapter 9: The Village Spreads Its Wings

Explosive growth and rapid development characterized the first few years of the town's existence. Not all of it was smooth sailing, however.

Reminiscing of the early days, Myers recalled that one of the first official acts of the new governing body was as he put it, "to do a little annexing of our own." On February 16, 1950, just three weeks after the town incorporated, the Town Trustees annexed existing platted subdivisions adjacent and abutting to the original incorporated area. This action added the Village Addition Replat, the Village Addition Supplementary Replat and the Village 3rd Addition to the corporate limits of the town. In a matter of weeks, the geographic area of the town had almost doubled.

Not all of this newly acquired territory had been easy to come by, --especially the land that had been owned by Ida Hasley who, by all accounts, was a colorful character. Hasley, who's exact relationship to original homesteader Henry Hasley is unknown, owned forty acres of land located on the southwest corner of Britton and Penn. Hasley had refused repeated offers by Duffner to buy her property. Her obstinance had Duffner somewhat perplexed as Hasley was by no means wealthy and appeared to need the money. Duffner's son Jack described Hasley this way:

"Boy, was she a character. I saw her at a meeting for the county planning commission with her hose rolled down to her ankles. I couldn't imagine why she wouldn't sell because her house was raunchy. She sat on crate boxes and used small pieces of two by fours for ashtrays."

Yet, Duffner, was persistent and Hasley eventually agreed to sell the land, --but only if Duffner would name a street after her in the new addition. Today, Hasley Drive begins at Pennsylvania Avenue and extends southwesterly through the heart of Casady Square all the way to the city limits at Wellington Avenue.

Having successfully completed the town's initial annexations, the trustees set their sights on additional land adjacent to the fledgling town. Immediately to the south and west of The village a substantial amount of unincorporated, developed land lie waiting for the taking. Things started to get interesting when several residents living in the area, which was and still is, generally known as West Nichols Hills, approached the town trustees to annex the area.

Town officials appeared uneasy with this notion. Yet, acting perhaps a bit hastily, the town, nevertheless proceeded to annex the area on February 27, 1950. The trustees, perhaps expecting a fight, were quick to qualify their action by stating that they would be willing to de-annex the area, if that is what the residents of the area ultimately wanted. For better or for worse, the new town

now extended on the south all the way to Wilshire and as far to the west as May Avenue.

Floyd Myers vividly recalled the action “stirring up the proverbial hornets nest”. According to Myers, through misunderstanding and gossip, a group of disgruntled citizens organized to oppose the string of annexations by the town. Myers recalls having some difficulty in understanding their motives except that the opponents appeared to favor annexation by Oklahoma City.

The rebellious citizens held a series of informal meetings that culminated in a public meeting in Britton in which all interested citizens of the fledgling town were invited to attend. Myers recalled attending the meeting and observing the meeting unfold as he anonymously took a seat in the back row of the room.

According to Myers, the meeting commenced with a congenial and almost jovial atmosphere. A state representative chaired the meeting and proceeded to extol the virtues of the meeting at hand. His remarks, at first were amusing and intended to stimulate enthusiasm among the attendees. When the remarks became absurd and disparaging with a roar of, “who is this Floyd Myers?” Myers’ fighting spirit was aroused. Rising to his feet, Myers marched down the center of the aisle, announcing on the way, “I am Floyd Myers and I want to introduce myself.” Taken aback by this unexpected turn of events, the speaker hastily disappeared off to a side exit not to be seen again.

A silence fell across the room as Myers took the rostrum. Unable to recall his exact words, Myers later said that what he said must have had a sobering affect on the crowd as when he concluded his remarks, the meeting simply broke up and the organized protest ended quietly with a whimper.

Myers viewed this moment as a critical turning point in the history of the young town and crucial in saving The Village and helping to foster continued growth of the community. Yet at best, this was only a partial victory for Myers and the town. On March 18, 1950, a majority of the residents living in the West Nichols Hills area voted to be de-annexed from the corporate limits of The Village. A few days later, on March 27, the board of trustees passed Ordinance #2 promptly de-annexing West Nichols Hills and thus ending its brief stint as part of The Village.

In this action, Block 134A of the first Village Addition and Lot 3, Block 102 of the Nichols Hills Suburban Tracts, were retained as part of The Village. Being somewhat disjointed from the rest of The Village and more geographically part of Nichols Hills, Lot 3, Block 102 was later de-annexed on October 24, 1952. Looking at the de-annexed area today, proud citizens of The Village might feel justified in saying “their loss, our gain.”

Besides seeking to expand the borders of the new community, Myers and his fellow trustees also rolled up their sleeves and addressed many other needs of the upstart community. Attorney Charles B. France, who was co-owner of Suburban Water Company and also co-signor of the incorporation petition, was retained by the town as legal counsel.

Ken Eugene Treadwell, a night watchman for Duffner, was appointed to serve on October 28, 1950 to serve as the first Town Marshal. Old timers remember Treadwell as a “dandy” who took his job seriously and backed it up by packing two pearl-handled pistols which, to some, must have been reminiscent of the bygone days of the wild west. Upon his appointment, Treadwell punctually posted a \$1,000 bond and immediately turned his attention to the town’s out-of-control stray dog problem.

Also on that date, the office of Building Commissioner was created and Dale Langley was appointed the town’s first Building Commissioner. Langley was just a young pup who had the good fortune of working with C.E. Duffner to build about sixty homes in The Village.

According to Langley, “Duffner was a good man with great foresight, “ adding with a chuckle, “he liked to drink a little though.” “I just walked up to him one day and told him that I wanted to be a builder and, just like that, he helped me finance the purchase of lots to get started, ” recalls Langley.

Being responsible for issuing building permits and performing building inspections for the fast growing town, Langley remembers his biggest challenge as the construction of Casady Square.

“I was just twenty-two years old at the time, and some of those ole contractors didn’t think a youngster should be telling them what to do.” Adding with a grin, “They did what I said anyway.”

During Myers term the first ordinances regulating traffic and animals were also passed. Myers and his colleagues also levied the first gross receipt taxes on the sale of water and gas bringing in much needed revenue for the incipient town.

Undaunted by the furor over annexations, the trustees continued on their quest to expand the horizons of the new-sprung town. Before the end of the town’s first year of existence, the trustees adopted Ordinance #3 and #4 which annexed the Village 4th Addition and Casady Heights 2nd Addition respectively.

The second of three de-annexations in the fifty-year history of The Village would also take place on October 28, 1950 culminating in the relinquishment of the homes on the north side of Westminster between Penn and Greystone. These homes are part of Nichols Hills today. Also, on this day, the town made its

first foray to the north of Britton Road by the annexation of the Casady Heights 4th Addition.

As it turned out, the Casady Heights 4th Addition would be the last Duffner-Harrison joint venture, --one in which the dynamic duo would forge a new alliance to purchase and develop the eighty acres of land on the northwest corner of Britton and Penn. The land had originally been owned by homesteader Frank M. Light but at the time of this purchase was under the control of Jack Clarke, the son and successor of Frank Clarke of Dodge dealership notoriety.

The deal took shape over a cup of coffee one morning. In the transaction, Duffner deeded to Floyd Harrison part of the land located on the southwest corner of Britton and Penn. This parcel of land would later become the first corner of Casady Square Shopping Center.

Christine Horton, wife of former Mayor Clark Horton, recalls the newspaper running a contest for people to write what they thought should be included in the new shopping center soon to be built at Penn and Britton.

“I won that contest plus \$100. And they built everything I mentioned in my letter except a theatre,” said Horton.

In June of 1951 at the age of 49, Duffner passed away thus bringing to an untimely conclusion his contributions to the further development of The Village. Sadly, Duffner didn't live to see much development north of Britton Road or the first phase of Casady Square. According to Jack Duffner, Harrison was extremely gracious in offering the Duffner family a continuation of its position in the ongoing development. The offer, was regrettably declined by the surviving family members and Duffner's partnerships with Floyd Harrison were dissolved leaving just Harrison and his remaining partners to complete the development.

In April of '59, Town Trustees Ben McCammon, Fred Blagg and Dr. Neil Allen honored the town's co-founder by naming a new five-acre park on Hefner Road “Clarence Duffner Park”.