

# OUR HISTORY

Each year, the Celebrate Wildwood Event is held near the anniversary date of the City's incorporation on September 1, 1995. As part of this event, the City's Historic Preservation Commission compiles information on Wildwood's rich history, which began many centuries before it became a community. There are two (2) history sections in this year's booklet. The first focuses on the eleven (11) historic communities that formed, and defined, much of the character of Wildwood. The second section dives into the general history in the area from Pre-History through 1776. You can look forward to historical information from 1776, to modern day, over the next four (4) years of this event, all leading up to the City's 25th anniversary in 2020. Each year's booklet will focus on a different time-frame and move closer to present day.

Over the past year, the Historic Preservation Commission has been working diligently on a historic marker program. A marker has been created for each of the historic communities and are being placed within each area. In this booklet, you will find the text located on each of these markers. You'll also find a photograph from each community, as well as a QR Code you can scan for additional information. What is a QR Code you ask? QR stands for Quick Response Code. These are funny looking graphic boxes that work much like a bar code, when you checkout at the store. Each code, when scanned using an app on your smartphone, will take you to a specific page on the City's website, where you can read additional historical information on each community. If you don't have a smartphone, or don't want to download a QR Code Reader app, then you can find the information by visiting the City's website at: [www.cityofwildwood.com/hpc](http://www.cityofwildwood.com/hpc).

If you would like more information, want to become involved, or share your historical information, please visit the City's website at [www.cityofwildwood.com/hpc](http://www.cityofwildwood.com/hpc) or contact the Department of Planning at (636) 458-0440.



## HISTORIC CENTAUR –1885–



James MacKay settled almost 4,000 acres in this area, at the mouth of Bonhomme Creek, in 1797, which was originally known as St. Andrews. It was under the control of the Spanish government, which granted MacKay land for his service in transporting soldiers up the Missouri River to remove British troops, mapping the river, and encouraging other settlers to the area from Kentucky and Tennessee, mainly of Scottish and Irish descent. German immigrants came to the area in the 1830s. Anton Leiweke founded the Centaur Lime Company in 1891 and the community became an area of commerce due to the rich resources and transportation options the Missouri River and the Rock Island Railroad provided. [Other settlers in this area included Alexander McCourtney, William Bellew, William Coleman, Robert Coleman, John Coleman, Henry Tyler, Theodore St. Onge, Adam Kesselring, Johann Sandfoss, and Henry Kelpel.]

The Historic Centaur Area has known tragedy. On May 5, 1932, an automobile was struck by a Rock Island freight train and killed four members of the Leiweke Family, with a fifth seriously injured. Anton Leo Leiweke, 53 years old, President and

2003 - Green Rock Trail Challenge is offered on this heritage trail, between Rockwoods Reservation and Greensfelder County Park, on National Trails Day.

2003 - Wyman Center adds two new buildings to its facility on Forby Road.

2004 - Wildwood Town Center Project is proposed by Koman Properties and thereafter constructed.

Treasurer of the Centaur Lime Company, Dolores, his 11 year old daughter, Loretta, his 11 year old niece, and Joseph Jr., his 10 year old nephew (children of Joseph H. C. Leiweke) were the victims. Anton's brother, Joseph H. C. Leiweke, 55 years old, Vice-President and Secretary of the Centaur Lime Company, was seriously injured. The Leiweke family was driving from their home in Centaur to Ascension Catholic Church in Chesterfield. Witnesses, Reverend McCartney, pastor of Ascension Catholic Church and St. Anthony's Church at Centaur, and Minnie Bellairs of Chesterfield, testified they were driving about 50 feet behind the Leiweke's automobile and did not hear a train whistle. They also asserted that trees and structures interfered with the train engineer's vision. This tragic accident had a profound effect on the Centaur community due to the significance and role of the Leiweke Family in this area.



## FOX CREEK —1860—



Fox Creek drains west through this area and was named by an early hunter, Josiah McClure, who shot a very large fox there. McClure and Fred Schulze were early settlers in the area. Schulze opened a store, which became the Fox Creek Post Office, and he served as the postmaster until Frederick Hencken was appointed in 1860. On March 7, 1862, a notable skirmish occurred between a faction of the Confederate Army and of the 4th and 10th Missouri Cavalry Units of the Union Army, led by Captain Benjamin Ludlow. Five Union soldiers were wounded and the Confederate incursion into the area retreated. Thereafter, the area remained solidly in Union control.

## HISTORIC GLENCOE —1854—



Earliest known inhabitants were Native Americans, who established a trail where present-day Old State Road is located. A Spanish Land Grant was established in 1803 by the first Euro-American settler, Ninian Hamilton. The Missouri-Pacific Railroad extended a line to Glencoe in 1851 to serve industries located there, including lime-kiln works, lumbering, and grist (flour) mills. Large stone homes and summer retreat cottages were built by families from St. Louis. Among some of these early residents were Robert K. Woods, William L. Ewing, Alfred Carr, B.W. Lewis, A.W. Alexander, James E. Yeatman, John Whitsett, and Judge Henry McCullough. Land speculators, Woods, Christy, & Co. surveyed the town of Glencoe in 1854, creating residential lots and the network of grid streets, which still remain today.

2004 - Town Center Development Manual is completed and adopted by the City.

2004 - Ed Marshall is elected Mayor.

2004 - "Money Magazine" selects Wildwood as one of the Best Places to Live in the Midwest.

2005 - City's Anniversary Park opens to big crowds.



## HISTORIC GROVER –1879–



This village, which comprises much of Wildwood’s commercial core on Old Manchester Road, was originally called St. Friedling and Maple Grove. The first post office was established during the Grover Cleveland Administration and John Brown, the first postmaster, named the village of Grover, after the President. One of the most notable structures is the large two-story building, located at 16962 Manchester Road, which served as the original Wildwood City Hall from 1995 through 2009. It was probably built by Fred Rettker about 1879. It was the only general store in the immediate vicinity. Louis Fick bought the store in 1890 for two thousand dollars. Elmer Funk then took ownership of the property in 1921.

The store and the picnic area to the east became a favorite gathering place and was soon known as ‘Funks Grove,’ where parades, picnics and band concerts regularly occurred. Another early settler included Freidlien Wetterer, who came to St. Louis from Baden Baden, Germany in 1854 and worked as a wagonmaker in St. Louis, before opening a wagonmaking shop in Ballwin. Following the Civil War, he moved to Grover, had four sons, and also acquired a farm of 84 acres. Judge Frederick W. Steines, the ‘best known man’ in the Meramec Township, and Justice of the Peace for many years, lived in Grover. The town also boasted of a blacksmith shop and a well-known tavern owned by Christian Von Gruben.

2005 - St. Louis Community College – Wildwood Campus is proposed and thereafter Phase One is completed. The facility, located in Phase One of the overall campus plan, is the City’s first LEED building and designated “Platinum.”

2005 - Pedestrian bridge across State Route 100 is completed in Town Center; only such structure across this State roadway in entire region.

2005 - Wildwood Greenway Corridor trail network is expanded with addition of segments along both sides of the State Route 100 right-of-way.



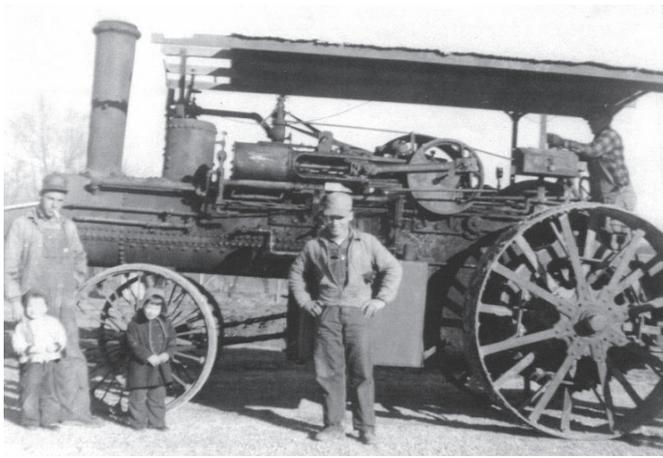
Anna and her father Henry Poertner in front of their store in Hollow.

## HISTORIC HOLLOW –1834–



This village was originally named “Deutsch Hollow” by the German settlers and for “Dutch” Charlie Paffrath, who purchased a property from Samuel Harris and opened a tavern on the much-traveled highway, Market Street (now Manchester Road), which connected St. Louis to the Capital in Jefferson City. This tavern, along with William Barthold’s, another earlier settler, home and stables, were popular stopping places for travelers who camped out there during the California and Kansas migrations. Throughout the 1800s, Hollow had a store, blacksmith, carpenter, and tavern. It was also a relay point for the Jefferson City stagecoach line. Not much remains of the original settlement, except a few houses.

The original tavern was rebuilt in 1958 and became the historical dance hall and roadhouse, Stovall’s Grove, which carries on as a well-known venue for live music. In 1849, the Hencken Family purchased land in Hollow and retained it for 100 years. The land for the Hollow School House was donated by Henry Hencken in 1869. Henry Hencken’s home is now owned by the Wildwood Historical Society. In the mid-1900s, when the road carried more traffic, there were two general stores, one operated by the Hencken Brothers, and the other by Henry Poertner, a shoemaker, a harness maker, two blacksmiths, one operated by Joeseph Tieman, and a carpenter shop.



## HISTORIC KELPE –1852–



The Historic Village of Kelpe was the name given to this small hamlet and post office that was near the intersection of Wild Horse Creek Road and Ossenfort Road, which was settled by this early pioneer family. In 1852, Henry Kelpe (I) left Hanover Germany, with his wife and three

sons, on a six-month trip to England, then to New Orleans. The family then traveled up the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, until they reached this area, purchased 40 acres for \$200, and pioneered a farmstead. The family grew crops, such as wheat and corn, and sold dried fruit from the numerous fruit trees on the property, while also harvesting lumber for barrel staves and making corn whiskey. Henry Kelpe (II) married Caroline Arbegast, had four children, and built a home in 1885, while continuing to farm the valley. He also served as postmaster and blacksmith for the area from 1886-1896. This pioneer families' remains are buried in unmarked graves in Babler State Park, while many of their ancestors continue to live in the Wildwood Area to this day. Another early pioneer family that predated the Kelpes, and settled in the area during the early 1800s, was the Bacon family from Virginia. Rising land values and the draw of westward expansion led to an increase in migration further west. Thus, many of the Bacons sold their properties to German immigrants, such as the Kelpes, as early as the 1830s. Among some members of this early pioneer family from Virginia were brothers Nathaniel, William, Langston, and Ludwell Bacon. Nathaniel Bacon stayed in the area, which became Kelpe.



## HISTORIC MELROSE –1851–



The name implies "sweet rose" and this village had a very roseate setting in 1851, when developer Charles H. Haven acquired 1,000 acres of Federal Land Claims and platted the lots as a nucleus for a great "Park of Fruits of a Thousand Acres." It contained fruit trees and

flowers of every description, as well as orchards and vineyards. Mr. Haven tried to publicly auction the platted lots to wealthy St. Louis residents as places to build summer homes. He brought interested parties from the Glencoe Train Station, along with a brass band, to Melrose to generate interest in his enterprise. But the enterprise fell into debt and the sheriff sold the property. In 1879, the atlas indicates a three-story frame seminary building and, later, the Melrose school, which still stands, located in the area. Herman Kreienkamp, a merchant in Melrose, built a large frame store and post office. This structure was referred to as Melrose Hall, as the building could be rented out for events during the 1880s. It still stands today, known as the Kreienkamp Store, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

2006 - Cherry Hills Golf Course is rezoned for single family dwellings.

2005 - Wildwood turns ten (10) years old.

2005 - City receives ACEC Engineering Excellence Award for Manchester Road/Taylor Road Roundabout.

2006 - Master Plan update is completed, reflecting a year-long process in this regard.



## HISTORIC MONARCH –1886–



Monarch Station was a whistle-stop railway depot on the Rock Island Railroad (originally known as the Saint Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad, when established in 1886-87). The settlement of Monarch (earlier called Atherton, then Eatherton) straddled what is now the present-day Wildwood and Chesterfield border, near Wild Horse Creek, Eatherton, and Centaur Roads. A post office was opened in Monarch in 1895 and was active until 1907. William Sutton served as Monarch's only postmaster. The Sutton family lived on the top floor of the grocery store and remained there, after the store closed. For several years, there was a restaurant/tavern at the bottom of the hill, to the east of the current railroad crossing, and was known for its chicken and steak dinners. People came from St. Louis by train on the weekends, and there were some guest cabins on the property. It was 1941, before some area residents had electricity. The Chesterfield-Monarch Levee, originally called the Monarch Levee, is the major flood protection structure bordering the Chesterfield Valley. It was originally constructed by farmers to protect their bottom lands from frequent Missouri River flooding. Over time, the levee was expanded and heightened, and much of this farmland was absorbed by development. During the Great Flood of 1993, the Chesterfield-Monarch Levee failed about one mile north of the site of the old Monarch Station, and the entire valley was inundated by floodwater from the Missouri River.

2006 - Old Pond School is restored and associated park is opened to the public.

2006 - Crossings Community Improvement District is formed for a fifteen (15) acre area of the Wildwood Town Center Project and it eventually becomes the owner of the parking garage.



## HISTORIC ORRVILLE –1858–



Founded by the Orr Family, from Cowcaddens, Glasgow, Scotland, beginning with the first post office established in 1858. The Orrs sold several tracts of land to families, such as the Eathertons. The Hoppenberg-Fick General Store and Post Office, a blacksmith shop, a wagon-making shop, and the Orrville School all existed here, along with a 'modern and splendid' mill. The mill contributed to the development of the town and established Orrville as a trading center in west St. Louis County. Notable early settlers were William Parks Bacon, R.G. Coleman, a physician, Christian Hohman, a blacksmith, Henry Kesseliring, a wagonmaker, Gustave Hoppenberg, and Phillip A. Fick.

2006 - Bethel United Methodist Church celebrates its 150th Anniversary.

2006 - Voters approve St. Paul Road Annexation and a one square mile area of land is added to Wildwood.



## HISTORIC POND —1835—

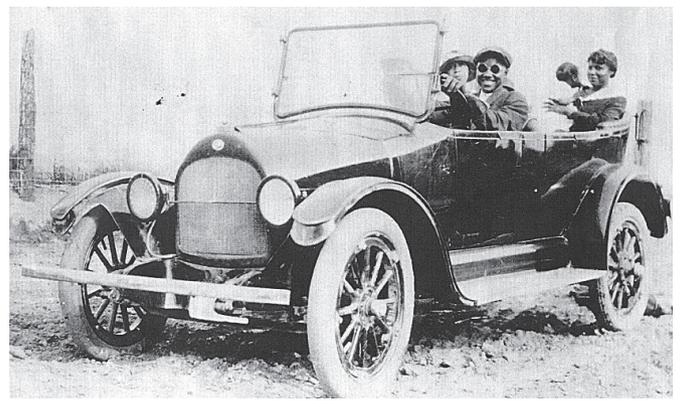


Founded on the old State Road established by Congress, which connected St. Louis to the capital in Jefferson City, and later would become known as 'Historic Route 66'. Cyrus Speers, an original settler, came to the area in 1831 and kept a store and tavern there for many years. The village also included a hotel, two blacksmith shops, and a whip manufactory. Other notable settlers of the area were the Hillenkamps, Dreinhofers, Rengstorffs, Hillebrands, and Essens. Emma Essen, and her sister, maintained the Pond Hotel in 1911. Pond has always been a commerce center, with many of its current businesses now hosted in remaining historic buildings.

## HISTORIC WESTLAND ACRES —1879—



This predominately African-American community, whose history is linked to that of the Union Baptist Church and the families of former slaves, was settled c.1879, but its future inhabitants had a much longer history in the area. In 1797, Daniel Boone relocated from Kentucky to St. Charles County, Missouri by first transporting his slaves via the Missouri River. Lawrence Long, and approximately fifty settler families and their slaves, made the trip as well. While Boone settled on the west side of the Missouri River, Long's family and slaves settled on the east side in the Bonhomme Creek Area. William West and Polly Ellis were



included in that group of slaves owned by Lawrence Long. Antioch Baptist Church was formally established along Wild Horse Creek Road, west of Eatherton Road, in 1841 by white Baptist planters, mainly from Virginia, who owned slaves and had large plantation holdings in today's Wild Horse Creek Valley Area. After the Civil War, the plantation owners deeded the old church building and one acre of ground to several of the newly freed slaves. The plantation owners then constructed the current Antioch Baptist Church and Cemetery further to the east on Wild Horse Creek Road. The "colored" church became Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in 1872. In the first quarter of the 20th century, the Mount Pleasant Baptist congregation began a slow decline and the building was eventually abandoned. However, the roots of the present Union Baptist Church in Westland Acres include descendants of former slaves of the Tyler and Coleman Families and the membership of the Mt. Pleasant Colored Baptist Church. In 1879, William West purchased 133 acres of land from John Long and Joel Frazier and donated a part of it as a burial ground for family members of freed slaves. This acreage was next to the land originally transferred to a new Colored African Baptist Church three miles east of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. Matilda and William West settled the land and raised seven children. The name 'Westland Acres' originated decades ago and became commonly known in the early 1990s when Clifford and Doris Frazier, and other prominent African-Americans of the area, worked to assure the heritage of the area is preserved. Westland Acres was designated as a "Wildwood Historic District" in 2005.

2007 - Rural Internet Access Committee is formed to address internet access for the rural areas of Wildwood.

2007 - Hamilton-Carr Greenway Corridor and trail completed and links the Meramec River to Rockwoods Reservation and includes a tunnel under Old State Road, at State Route 109.

2007 - Action Plan for Parks and Recreation is adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission and ratified and endorsed by the City Council.

# WILDWOOD YESTERDAY AND TODAY

## A HISTORY OF ITS CULTURE, PEOPLE, AND PLACES | ERA - PRE-HISTORY TO 1776

The area that is now Wildwood has been a place of gathering/community for much more time than its recent history might indicate, given to its rich natural resource base and abundance of waterways and wildlife. Early nomadic people and the first Native Americans recognized this area as rich and beneficial for their survival and began what would be a long history of settlement, resource use and regeneration, and change. This era of history foretells the future and accentuates the beauty of this area.

An outline of the major events, groups, individuals, and other information is provided below to describe this era of time within this special place of Missouri, in the St. Louis Region, now known as Wildwood.

Information contained herein from the Pre-Clovis to Proto-historic Periods was derived, in its entirety, from the following source: Harl, Joe and Machiran, Robin, Archeological Research Center of St. Louis, Inc.: Prehistoric Cultures of the City of Wildwood, St. Louis County, Missouri (Prepared for City of Wildwood, Missouri). The City of Wildwood extends its appreciation to Joe Harl and Robin Machiran of the Archeological Research Center of St. Louis, Inc. in this regard.

**Pre-Clovis Period (Before 9500 B.C.)** - Given its timeframe, much of this period contains stories of how civilizations began, including aliens from space and the survivors from the

lost city of Atlantis. However, archaeologists believe the first inhabitants of the area came from Siberia, via a land bridge during the last glacial period, when sea levels are theorized to have dropped as much as 330 feet due to the formation of ice. Evidence of these peoples traversing through the area that is now Wildwood does not exist, but, according to Joe Harl and Robin Machiran, local and trusted archeologists, it may be as simple as the remnants of their respective cultures have not yet been identified for investigation.

**Paleoindian Period (9500 - 8000 B.C.)** - This period actually has evidence of the first humans in North America. These first humans were situated around the North American continent, including areas in what is now Wildwood. These first inhabitants hunted with wooden spears that were tipped with stone projectiles. One of the verifiable sites of this period is near Faust Park, but none have been discovered yet in Wildwood; however, such a location could have been overlooked. Another famous site of this period is Mastodon State Park, which is located in Jefferson County, Missouri. These locations have common physical characteristics that are typical of these inhabitants, in that they temporarily camped on the bluffs above waterways, such as the Missouri River, and hunted, gathered, and sheltered there.

2008 - Timothy Woerther is elected to his first of two-terms as Mayor of Wildwood.

2007 - Wildwood Hotel opens for business in Town Center, offering a boutique experience in Wildwood.

2008 - Glencoe City Park opens in Glencoe Community and includes a connection to the Hamilton-Carr Greenway.

2008 - Westland Acres, a historic African-American Community, is designated as the City's first historic district.

**Dalton Period (8900 - 7900 B.C.)** - This period provides an interesting snapshot into the Wildwood Area, in that it finally provides solid evidence of inhabitants within this portion of western St. Louis County. These inhabitants were again not long-term settlers, but still more nomadic, but beginning to stay in a single or multiple locations for more extended periods of time, given the plentiful resources of food, water, and shelter (termed seasonal rounds). As the stays grew in length, the remnants of these inhabitants are now being discovered and studied, but does not include their housing, which was determined to be made of wood. Therefore, these inhabitants were not cave dwellers and likely, any shelters would no longer exist today.

The Dalton Period is also the first where artifacts are found in the Wildwood Area. One of the few identifiable locations of these finds is Babler State Park. The descriptions provided in Joe Harl and Robin Machiran’s book state the find was in a rock shelter (an overhang from an exposed rock layer) within the current State Park property, but offers no tangible artifacts of these people and their characteristics. Other sites located in the region indicate they were hunters of small game, including deer, but used all of the area’s resources to survive and grow.

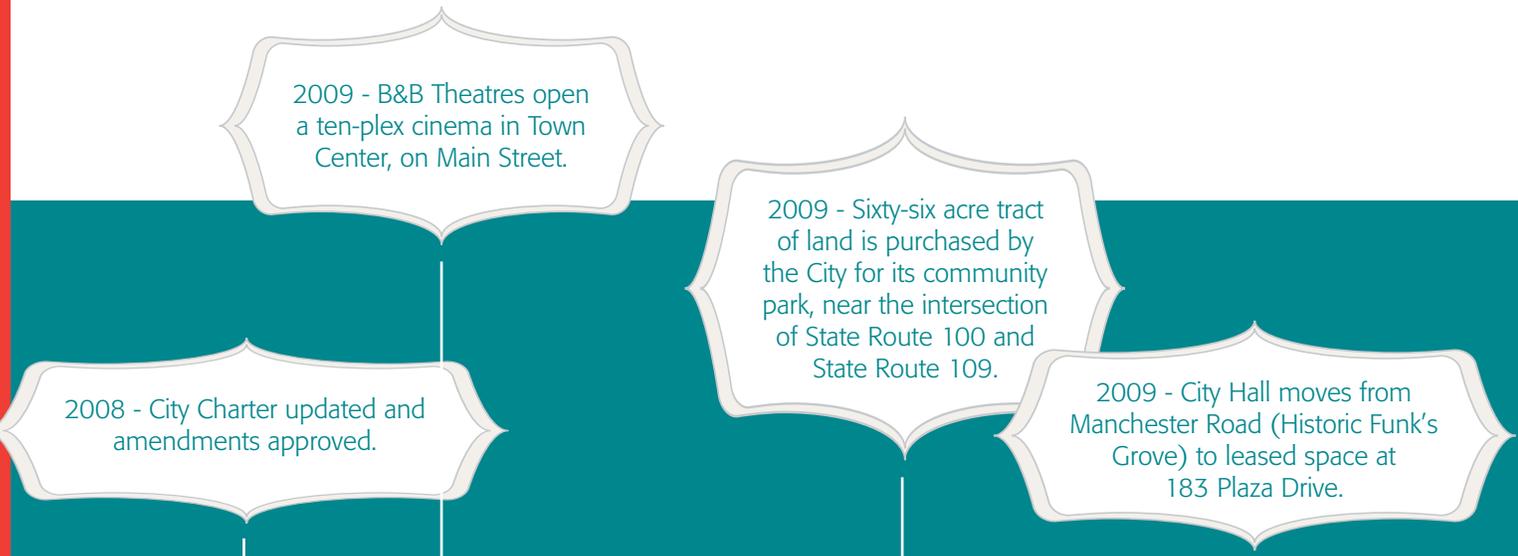
These inhabitants also sought this area due to the Burlington Limestone Formation that is the common rock type in much of Wildwood and prevalent in western St. Louis County. This formation is also riddled with Chert, a hard rock, which was used to create tools and weapons. This formation offers many of the scenic roadway cuts along State Route 109 and underlies most of Wildwood. Finding the materials for tools and weapons, water, and bluffs for shelter, these early inhabitants would generally stay

at a location, until the resources were depleted and then move on to another similar spot, where these items were once again plentiful.

**Early Archaic Period (7900 - 6500 B.C.)** - During this period, the seasonal rounds by the first travellers became more entrenched and, where circumstances were most favorable, these encampments became quite large, with the best example of such in the St. Louis Region being the American Bottoms Area of Illinois (just to the east of the City of St. Louis). These encampments are generally located on high ground, but with easy access to nearby waterways and other food sources.

According to reports prepared for this period, no archaeological finds have been determined to exist in Wildwood. This circumstance does not mean these inhabitants were not in this area, but have not yet been verified through artifacts found by a formal dig in Wildwood. Accordingly, inferences can be developed about this period for the Wildwood Area, but not verified.

**Middle Archaic Period (6500 - 3500 B.C.)** - Climate change dictated the activities of the indigenous people to the Wildwood Area. This time period was one of global warming, which meant the first inhabitants faced new challenges, but also some unexpected opportunities. The warming caused some food sources to be lost and water to become even more important. While here in the Wildwood Area, locations along the Missouri and Meramec Rivers and Wild Horse Creek became hubs of activity, given the diversity of resources and the more usable lands attributed to the receding waters. At least six (6) sites have been documented in the Wildwood Area.



2008 - City Charter updated and amendments approved.

2009 - B&B Theatres open a ten-plex cinema in Town Center, on Main Street.

2009 - Sixty-six acre tract of land is purchased by the City for its community park, near the intersection of State Route 100 and State Route 109.

2009 - City Hall moves from Manchester Road (Historic Funk’s Grove) to leased space at 183 Plaza Drive.

These newly usable lands had once been under water, but were now habitable and fertile for use. This period is the first timeframe that many scholars believe field pumpkins were grown and harvested. Fishing and foraging remain the prime activities of the inhabitants of the Wildwood Area. Given the levels in water had changed, nets were introduced and used for fishing, which produced bountiful amounts of fish and amphibians, leading to parts of these catches being smoked and stored for consumption later. Consumption of nuts, as a primary dietary staple, is also noted during this period. Although some areas suffered during this period of climate change, the Wildwood Area's proximity to rivers, streams, and creeks led to an on-going presence by a growing population of inhabitants.

**Late Archaic Period (3500 - 700 B.C.)** - This period begins a major shift in how the inhabitants lived and prospered in the Wildwood Area. Driving this change was a documented growth in population that caused shortages of certain food at times. Up to this period, the inhabitants still roamed from place to place, based upon the seasons, to hunt and gather food. Now, in this period, changes that would not be abated began, starting with some of the inhabitants now forming semi-permanent communities. These communities were near resources that were deemed imperative and used to increase food sources and improve productivity. Along with these communities, many innovations, followed that reflected these inhabitants were no longer just surviving in the Wildwood Area, but prospering.

With population growth, resources began to be stretched, which led to new food technologies, such as earthen pits for cooking. Along with new food preparation approaches, communities of different peoples began to form for

self-preservation and advancement. These communities began to trade not only essentials, but also now, non-essentials, such as Hematite and Galena, along with Chert. All of these minerals and rocks were found in the Wildwood Area, with the latter being very abundant here. Along with trade, social functions increased in these communities, including group hunts and gatherings of food, and marriages. Near the end of this period, burials and permanent housing is beginning to be part of the community's society and legacy. Also, as this period came to a close, inhabitants were experimenting with agricultural techniques, seeking to grow food, rather than just to gather for each meal and day.

This period is well represented in the Wildwood Area, with at least nine (9) sites identified at this time. Other sites of these early communities are anticipated to be located in the Wildwood Area, two (2) more suspected in Wild Horse Valley. This period represented a new approach to many practices of the early inhabitants of this area and began a time of alteration to the environment that would last for many centuries to come.

**Early Woodland Period (700 - 150 B.C.)** - As this period dawned, the manufacture and the use of pottery are identified. The formation and use of pottery and vessels appear to have begun in the south, particularly in the area now that is Florida, followed along the Gulf Coast, then up the Mississippi Valley. This pottery indicates many of the practices of the past period were not necessarily abandoned, but supplemented by new technologies. However, in the Wildwood Area, no sites have been determined to exist here during this period, yet remained indicative of the Late Archaic Period practices being retained by the inhabitants here.

2009 - City receives award from Missouri Recycling Association for Outstanding Government Recycling Program.

2009 - City Charter updated and amendments approved.

2009 - Barbecue Bash moves to Wildwood.

2009 - Wildwood Farmers Market opens for business, every Saturday from May to October.

**Middle Woodland Period (150 B.C. - A.D. 300)** - The periods, in terms of their length in years, are now becoming more abbreviated and reflect a change in direction on a scale not known before.

During this period, the use of pottery became more widespread and the vessels themselves became more elaborate and ornate, even when used for daily living activities. Community settlements began to take on a social hierarchy and the leaders of them having great prestige. The artifacts that were discovered from these digs included ornate gems, copper, and other resources, all confirming these facts. This hierarchy went beyond just the individuals in these communities, but between villages themselves. Despite the growing competition between these settlements, warring and raiding appear to be limited, with diplomacy and trade used to offset growing disparities between people and their villages where they resided.

Trade remained an important part of this growing hierarchy among villages and brought wealth to some, but not all. Many inhabitants continued to subsist by hunting, gathering, and agricultural practices begun in the earlier periods of time, particularly the Late Archaic, and reside in a single location for more and more time. Again, the number of identified sites of this period is found in the Centaur and Monarch Areas of Wildwood, which is indicative of the importance of water for drink, agriculture practices, travel, and trade.

**Late Woodland Period (A.D. 300 - 900)** - As a period, it is different due to it being defined into two separate stages. These stages are early and late and the distinction is very important. This importance of this distinction is the first part of this period corresponds to a breakdown in many

of the advances in terms of community, travel, and trade and, in some instances, stopping altogether. This change corresponded with the "Dark Ages" in Europe. Experts have tried to define what led to this abrupt change in socialization. Some of these experts believe this change related to severe climate modification, widespread famine, and/or disease. Regardless of the cause in Europe, no expert is sure what led to the loss of growth in the Americas, but it is clear it did occur. During the early part of this period, leaders of these communities sought less to be identified by their wealth and possessions, but more for their altruistic behavior.

The inhabitants of these more isolated communities began to shift more to long-term and sustainable agricultural practices versus subsistence types. Popular crops in the Wildwood Area originally were Goosefoot and Knotweed. These plants were native to the area, easy to grow, and the seeds were boiled for the ease of consumption and use for other food products. Along with these plants, May Grass and Little Baby were transported from the south to eastern Missouri. Other plantings included gourds, squash, and oily seed plants. Tobacco was introduced and the first wooden pipes were discovered in digs.

These changes to agricultural practices led, in part, to the decentralization of communities and smaller groupings of inhabitants, given the land could now sustain the food needs year after year. Slash and burn was used to create the fields for plantings during this period. Flooding also replenished the soil with needed nutrients to sustain this new lifestyle.

During the later part of this first stage, the bow and arrow is first noted in finds from digs. Although early inhabitants

2010 - U.S. census is completed and Wildwood adds another 3,969 residents, despite worst recession in country's history.

2010 - Rock Hollow Trail opens and links to the Al Foster Memorial Trail.

2010 - Town Center Plan Update is completed and adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

2011 - City launches 'Frozen Feet Trail Run' in January and it is immediately one (1) of the most popular events in region among runners.

of this area of Wildwood began to use agricultural practices more and more, fish, mussels, waterfowl, and deer were still dietary staples. The bow and arrow area began a new practice in hunting during this period.

In the second stage of this period, the size of communities began to grow again. However, as represented by earlier periods, these communities were more transient again. Construction techniques and the quality of the pottery were minimal. The number of these communities in the Wildwood Area is estimated at seven (7) in total, which is more than many of the previous periods. This period ends with the communal need being preeminent, with the individual being less important.

**Emergent Mississippian Period (A.D. 900 - 1050)** - This period and its name remain a subject of debate. The debate focuses on whether the period really begins a new timeframe or is the extended terminus of the Late Woodland Period. This debate reflects the on-going changes in society at that time, as major events, such as weather, food shortages, or violence, seem to shape the outcomes of these major settlements in the St. Louis Area and elsewhere, more so than other forces of socialization. The results of this upheaval seem to take two (2) varying forms over this span of time in terms of individual aspirations, as well as the communities themselves, which included the consumption and promotion of objects and wealth to more altruistic and community deference by leaders of them and their inhabitants. The assumption could be made that in times of fewer events people tended to seek more for themselves and less for the community, whereas, when things became worse, the community arose to serve all peoples' needs.

Despite the debate on the progress of the cultures and peoples forming them, communities did exist in all shapes and sizes during this period. In fact, scholars have noted that some of these communities became more organized and function around what might be termed as a 'town square.' This town square resembled a cross within a circle of houses that is thought to reflect the four (4) quadrants of the compass, the four (4) seasons, and/or the cycles of life. Archaeologists and scholars have theorized this direction also may be the beginning of rituals of a religious nature. During this period, these clusters, i.e. a central meeting point and a circle of houses, also reflected the beginnings of a trend toward family groups residing in proximity to each other over the homogeneity of the group of inhabitants all mixed among each other.

Pottery advances also occurred during this period, with changes to agents used to bind the materials and alterations of vessels to serve many new purposes, all creating more efficient use of foods and other staples. Seed pots and stumpware are commonly referred to within this period, as representative of these improvements to pottery design, function, and appearance. These changes to the pottery used for daily life activities and ceremonies also indicate trade was very popular in this period of time. Vessels forged and formed from known areas of southeastern Missouri appear here in eastern Missouri, along with materials from certain geologic formations found here in eastern Missouri appearing elsewhere in the Mississippi River Valley. Along with trade, ideas were exchanged, including games.

It has been offered by experts that, during this period of time the development and sharing of these goods and ideas was not just a local phenomenon, but through-

2011 - Wildwood Farms community garden opens to fifty (50) gardeners grows to over one hundred (100) participants by 2015.

2011 - Old Pond School placed on the National Register of Historic Places – U.S. Department of Interior – National Park Service.

2011 - St. Paul's Lutheran Church celebrates its 150th Anniversary.

out the Mississippi River Valley. Also, given the level of commonality between these goods and ideas, this period appears to be a time of stability and no new group of inhabitants coming to the area and introducing new approaches to life. No sites from this period have been discovered in Wildwood.

**Mississippian Period (A.D. 1050 -1400)** - This period, the last before the advent of European explorers and then immigrant settlers to the area, is dominated here in eastern Missouri by Cahokia Mounds and the communities that served as satellites to it. In this period, scholars argue the level of predominance Cahokia Mounds held in terms of trade, influence, and role, but none appear to believe it did not have undue influence on all of this area, including the land now part of the City of Wildwood. Other communities of many different sizes are also known to have existed during this period of time. These other communities have been defined by Melvin Fowler as second, third, and even fourth line communities, all having different characteristics and functions.

The second line communities include multi-mound communities in close proximity to the Cahokia Mounds and were generally located where St. Louis and East St. Louis have developed. The third line communities represented villages that had economic and political importance, given their distance from Cahokia Mounds. The fourth line communities have been defined as farmsteads and isolated outposts that formed a satellite network around Cahokia Mounds and provided support to it through trade and manufacturing. Some scholars do not support this theory of community development, given for a number of reasons, while others have argued that Cahokia Mounds did dominate all of the area due to its economic, trade, and agricultural might. Another school of thought believes

that, despite its geographical control of the waterways of importance in this area, it did not have the wherewithal to control much territory, but depended on economic significance to bring a better quality of life to isolated villages though its support, particularly during difficult times. A final approach to the understanding of this period can be speculated as a migration of individuals from the Bootheel Area of Missouri changed the Cahokia Mounds Area, which is reflected in modifications to pottery designs, architecture, construction techniques, etc. However, others argue these changes were more a reflection of ideas being shared with the cultural center of the area and incorporated by its leaders into everyday life. This approach to the growth and change in society assumes the alterations that occurred were the culmination of hundreds of years of methodical trial and error.

A major find of this period was discovered in the Chesterfield Valley with the expansion of the levee in this area (northeast of Wildwood). The Dampier Site provided a wealth of information about settlements in this area during this period, including shell beads, whelk shells, ceremonial mask fragments, and others. This site was very similar to Cahokia Mounds, possibly lending support to the Melvin Fowler concept of line communities. Regardless, this period reflects an organization of ideas, governance, and hierarchy that would extend into the next period of time and beyond.

**Protohistoric Period (A.D. 1400-1700s)** - During this period, another environmental calamity is theorized to have occurred leading to the Mississippian Society ceasing to exist by the early 1400's, which is reflected in the decline of the larger settlements, such as Cahokia Mounds, near St. Louis. Again, theories abound on what might have caused this decline, from a period of high temperatures

2011 - Annual Founders' Day Celebration restarted again, after short hiatus, to celebrate all things Wildwood and the people who work to make it so.

2012 - Hidden Valley Ski Resort expands runs and adds tubing hill.

2011 - Wildwood is designated a "Tree City USA."

2012 - Monarch-Chesterfield Levee Trail is completed, which links much of the valley area together.



and little rain to erosion and loss of fertile soils, due to overuse and poor agricultural practices. Other experts argue the competition between the large market centers, like Cahokia Mounds, to newer markets and smaller decentralized centers, based more in the Late Woodland Period model, led to the decline of certain groups during this period. Whatever, the cause or causes leading to this decline in the society of these early inhabitants, the experts agree that further study, including in the Wildwood Area, is needed to better understand and document this precipitous decline that occurred.

The powerful and elite of these tribes during this period could no longer hold together the inhabitants of these large centers of trade and commerce, thus fragmentation began, leading to accelerating declines in trade and travel. In fact, experts theorize that inhabitants retreated to past practices, which included much smaller villages being formed, lasting just a few years before being abandoned, with many of them located in more isolated locations away from waterways of significance. These occupants of these smaller settlements also began to revert to subsistence farming and hunting and gathering. Even advances made in the molding of pottery retreated during this period. In the end, by the beginning of the 1400's, society was once again undergoing a major adjustment and change again.

Archeologists do note that many of the Native American tribes were claiming lands in the area of eastern Missouri and Wildwood, but none ever proceeded with settlements here. The Kickapoos, the Sac and Fox, Osage (related to the Cahokia Mounds inhabitants), and the Illniwek peoples are all referenced with influence in this area or claims, but none of their settlements have been found in eastern

Missouri, nor Wildwood. Such a find would be of critical importance to provide a better explanation of why, with abundant water, a wealth of natural resources, and an established network for transportation, trade, and communication, no sign of settlements exist in this part of Missouri for almost three hundred (300) years. In fact, when French Colonial settlers came to the region, they described it as "open territory."

**Colonial Period (A.D. 1700s to the Revolutionary War - 1776) - By Jill F. VonGruben, of the Wildwood Historical Society**

The history from 1700 to 1776 of the area now known as Wildwood can only be understood by surveying the history of North America from the fifteenth century through the eighteenth century. To put this timespan into perspective, the chronology follows as:

- 1492** Columbus's ships landed in the Caribbean while looking for a new route to Asia for the Spanish Crown.
- 1534** The St. Lawrence River was explored by Jacques Cartier of France. This was the beginning of New France.
- 1585** The Roanoke Island colony, first English settlement in America, was established. By 1590, it had disappeared.
- 1607** James Fort, Virginia, was established.
- 1610** Jamestown, Virginia, was founded by the Virginia Company of London for the Kingdom of England.
- 1699** Jamestown was abandoned after capital of Colony of Virginia was moved to what is now "Williamsburg."

2012 - Redistricting Committee modifies ward boundaries based upon census results.

2012 - Manchester Road Great Streets Master Plan is adopted and ratified by the City of Wildwood.

2012 - Wildwood is awarded the 2012 "Parks and Trails Development" MUNI Award, in recognition of Wildwood's commitment to development of its trail system.

**1673** Marquette was a Jesuit missionary. His goal was to convert the indigenous peoples. He was skilled at languages and made friends with the tribes during his travels.

Jacques Marquette, SJ, and Louis Joliet, accompanied by five other men in two bark canoes, travelled down the Mississippi River. Marquette and Joliet are considered the first Europeans to explore the Mississippi River and its course. In late June 1673, they reached the mouth of the Missouri River (confluence of Missouri and Mississippi Rivers), which Marquette described as "Muddy River". By July, he and his companions stopped their exploration at the Native

American village of Kappa (in Arkansas) at the mouth of the Arkansas River. Marquette and Joliet, based on conversation with the Quapaw tribe, surmised that the Mississippi River did in fact reach the Gulf of Mexico. They did not continue on to the Gulf of Mexico due to their concern that they would be captured and jailed by the Spanish who held the southern portion of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. In July 1673, they headed north again.



"Copy of the map published with Marquette's Journal, 1681." This map was Marquette's drawn from his 1673 exploration of the Mississippi River. (Source: Public Domain)

2013 - City adds a major segment to the Al Foster Memorial Trail with the construction of it west and south of the Glencoe Community.

2013 - New, and permanent, City Hall is completed and occupied on Main Street in Town Center.

2013 - City completes its 26th, and most recent, bridge replacement project on Wild Horse Creek Road, over Bates Creek.

2013 - City launches its new website.

There was a difference in philosophy between Spanish and French explorers during this time period. Spain's goal was to conquer and gain territory and peoples by force and enslavement. France's goal was to convert indigenous peoples to Catholicism and explore and gain territory through exploration.

The next major explorer was Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. He was a French adventurer and explorer. His goal was to expand upon Marquette's exploration of the Mississippi River.

De La Salle and his party of 23 Frenchmen and 31 Native Americans reached the Mississippi River on February 6, 1682. By February 13, 1682, the explorers reached the mouth of the Missouri River and camped for the night on the south bank of the Missouri River at the Mississippi River. In his journal, he noted established villages of "savages," which were probably of the Osage tribe.

By April 1682, de La Salle's party reached the Gulf of Mexico by following each of the 3 main branches of the Mississippi at its mouth. He and his party erected a pillar and cross bearing the Arms of France and declared possession of the territory of all the land drained by the Mississippi River and its tributaries. He named the territory, "Louisiana", in honor of the French King, Louis XIV.

De La Salle surmised the strategic and military importance of the Mississippi River. His goal was to survey the territories surrounding the Mississippi River to allow the establishment of a fort system to securely hold the territory for France. Unfortunately for France, this system of forts was not fully established.



De La Salle's map of New France (Source: Public Domain)



French flag of New France 1663-1763 (Source: Public Domain)

At its peak, New France encompassed what is now Canada south to the Gulf of Mexico and from the British Colonies on the Atlantic west to the Rocky Mountains.

One of the important components of the New France economy was fur trading. Fur was in great demand in Europe, and New France was a plentiful source. Trappers wound through the Louisiana Territory to capture and harvest fur pelts. These trappers were transient and followed their crop. They often intermarried with indigenous tribes. Illinois Country (Pays des Illinois) is the area more commonly known as Upper

2013 - Pond Athletic Association celebrates its 50th Anniversary.

2013 - Rockwoods Reservation celebrates its 75th Anniversary.

2014 - City hosts its first Art Festival, as part of the Celebrate Wildwood Event.

2013 - Bays ET and Wisper ISP rollout high-speed internet service to the rural areas of Wildwood.

Louisiana, which became the Midwestern United States and was a portion of the range of the fur traders. Illinois Country refers to the Algonquian tribes.



Image of what a temporary overnight camp would be for fur traders. (Source: Frances Anne Hopkins, Voyageurs at Dawn (detail) Public Domain)



Example of fur trapper's winter cabin (Source: Public Domain)

During this time period, in Illinois Country, there were very few permanent settlements. Des Peres is thought to be the oldest white settlement in Missouri, founded in 1700 by a group of Kaskaskia Native Americans who camped at the mouth of a river and named the spot in honor of the

two French priests who joined them. The French missionaries built a fort, chapel, and lodge, but they only lasted 3 years before moving on. In 1767, the site was resettled by French Canadians and named Carondelet.

In search of silver, the French found lead instead, which was a valuable resource in its use as a key component of ammunition at the time. Two mining villages were established early in the eighteenth century. In 1717, Mine La Motte (seven miles north of current day Fredericktown) was founded. In 1723, La Vieille Mine (Old Mines area north of current day Potosi) was founded by Philippe Francois Renault. In 1735 – 1750 (a range of dates is given since the date is disputed), Ste. Genevieve, Missouri was established and still is a viable town.

In 1754, the French and Indian Wars began in North America, which was between the British and their enemies, the French and Indian tribes, in the area of what would become the United States. The Seven Year's War was the name of the same conflict, which became a worldwide war in 1756. This dual continent war was incredibly expensive to both sides. The wars were brought to an end with the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Britain would gain all lands east of the Mississippi River. Cuba would stay under Spanish control, and the former Spanish territory of Florida would become British. Britain returned the Caribbean Islands to France. With the Treaty of Paris in 1763, France compensated their Spanish ally by giving French Louisiana Territory including the City of New Orleans, to Spain.

Though the Treaty of Paris was dated 1763, actual control of the Louisiana Territory occurred in 1762. It was at this

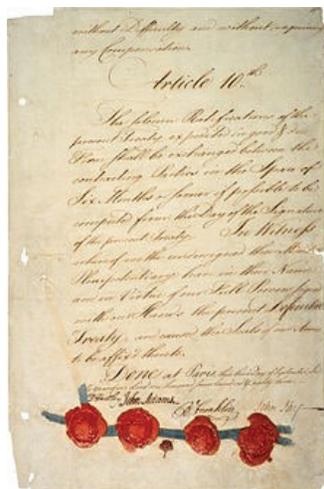
2014 - LaSalle Institute celebrates its 150th Anniversary at its Rue de LaSalle location.

2015 - Wildwood's Community Park opens with the completion of Phase I.

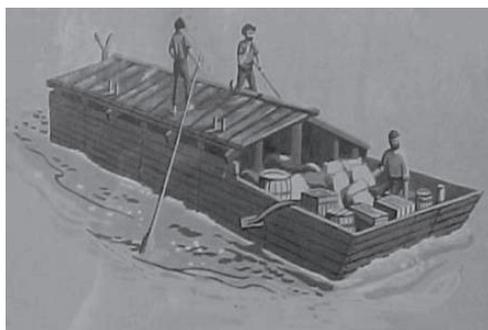
2014 - City's Finance Department is awarded Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, a total of sixteen years, and Distinguished Budget Award for nine years in a row.

2015 - Ryan S. Thomas, one (1) of City's first employees, is named the City's fifth City Administrator.

point that the area now encompassed as the State of Missouri changed from French to Spanish governance.



Treaty of Paris, last page (Source: Public Domain)



Drawing of flatboat (Source URL: [freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com) -- Public Domain)



Stone at La Salle Retreat Center (Photo Credit: Jill F. VonGruben, Wildwood Historical Society)

The site for the fur trading post of St. Louis was selected in 1764 by Pierre Laclede, who had received a land grant from Louis IX of France, and his scout, Auguste Chouteau. The construction of the village began in 1765.

It was not until 1769 that French-Canadian fur trader, Louis Blanchette, established the village of The Little Hills. This village would eventually become the city of St. Charles.

John Hildebrand's ancestors emigrated from Germany to Pennsylvania. (Note on Surname spelling: throughout records there are two to three different spellings of this name. This article has used the most commonly used.) In 1770, John Hildebrand brought his family down the Ohio River in a flatboat and eventually settled in the area of the Meramec River and Saline Creek a few miles south of the current city of Fenton, Missouri. The Hildebrand family lived there until 1788.

A flat stone, with "1774" and other indecipherable markings (perhaps a name) chiseled in it, was found on the grounds of the La Salle Retreat Center in the old Glencoe area of Wildwood. This photo does not show the markings, which are in the lower right-hand corner, but the chiseled numbers can be traced with a finger. Nothing is known about its significance or origin. The stone is still currently located at the Retreat Center.

In the area that we now know as Wildwood, there were transient encampments of the French fur traders, but no permanent villages. This is demonstrated by the artistic representations of French fur traders' temporary shelters

2015 - City is recognized for its project with the Missouri Department of Transportation for State Route 109.

**2015 - Wildwood turns twenty (20) years old.**

2015 - Bluff View Park opens, under a partnership with St. Louis County

2015 - Wabash, Frisco and Pacific Railroad in Glencoe Community celebrates its 75th Anniversary of its founding.

shown above. There were no villages or towns in which written records would be kept. They simply did not exist.

Whether under the governance of France or Spain, allegiance by inhabitants to the Roman Catholic Church in the Louisiana Territory was expected. The Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas was part of the Archdiocese of San Cristobal de la Habana, based in Havana Cuba. It encompassed the geographical area of Cuba, territories bordering the Gulf of Mexico, and the Louisiana Territory. The only mention of St. Louis in the Archives of the Diocese of Louisiana prior to 1776 was the notification for the purpose of the official records of the deaths of a family with New Orleans ties. The notification was made in early 1772 when St. Louis was still a village. It was not until the 1790s more details would be noted about this area in the Louisiana Diocese Archives. The St. Louis Archdiocese would not be established until 1826.

During the United States Revolutionary War, the lands west of the Mississippi that had once been French territory belonged to Spain. But the influential effect of the French governance is apparent in the names that appear in Wildwood today: Bonhomme Creek, Lafayette High School, LaSalle Springs Middle School, the LaSalle Spring and Marquette High School. Wild Horse Creek Road was originally called Riviere Cheval Sauvage.

Just the tip of Wildwood’s rich and varied history has been examined for this piece covering the period prior to the Revolutionary War. After the Revolutionary War, more European settlers came to this area and built churches, villages, and towns. And with that increase in settled population, came an increase in written records, physical artifacts, and details of people’s lives. Those stories comprise the next chapter in the history of Wildwood.

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2015 – City’s first Dog Park opens in Community Park

2015 - Wildwood is named one of Missouri’s ten most-beautiful cities by TheCultureTrip.com.

2016 – City publishes its 12th annual Calendar

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2016 – Wildwood named among Top 10 best small cities for families in America

2016 – Master Plan update is completed after a year-long review by a citizen committee, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council

2016 – James R. Bowlin enters office as the City's 5th elected Mayor

2016 – City adopts its first Economic Development Guide

2016 – The City wins 2 awards from the American Council of Engineering Companies for Excellence in Engineering on its Community Park project and the State Route 109 project, between Clayton Road and State Route 100

# Get Your Kicks on Route 66

