

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wildwood House

other name/site number LaMotte, Joseph and Elen Chambers, House

2. Location

street & town 40 Dames Court N/A not for publication

city or town Ferguson vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63135

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles 16 FEB, 2006
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

<p>I hereby certify that the property is:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____</p>	<p>Signature of the Keeper</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Date of Action</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
--	---	--

Wildwood House
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO
County and State

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/ITALIANATE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Brick
roof Metal
other Wood, Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Wildwood House
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO
County and State

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance
1857

Significant Dates
1857

Significant Persons
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

St. Louis County Dept. of Parks & Recreation

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Wildwood House
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO
County and State

II. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.64 acre

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 7/3/5/3/9/5 4/2/9/1/7/6/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

III. Form Prepared By

name/title Esley Hamilton
organization St. Louis County Dept. of Parks & Recreation date June 1, 2005
street & number 41 South Central Avenue telephone 314-615-0357
city or town Clayton state MO zip code 63105

IV. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

- Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title Barrietta Killiebrew
street & number 40 Dames Court telephone 314-331-5269
city or town Ferguson state MO zip code 63135

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO**

Narrative Description

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1857, Wildwood House is a two-story brick masonry house in the Italianate style, five bays by four, and measuring 44 by 36 feet, located at 40 Dames Court, a street otherwise lined with post-war ranch houses located on the east side of the City of Ferguson, Missouri. The white-painted house has a rectangular plan, a low hipped metal-clad roof, and four chimneys. The primary facade faces east, away from the street and toward a modest lawn shaded by old trees. Italianate details of the facade include beautifully scrolled paired brackets or modillions supporting the cornice, scrolled pedimented lintels above first-floor windows, segmentally arched second-story windows, and a jigsaw balustrade of scrolls and circles on both levels of the full-width porch. This balustrade rhymes with the trefoil transom light above the broad front door. The interior has a center hall dividing two rooms on each side. A long curved staircase rises to a landing against the west wall of the house and then returns to the second floor. The elevation toward the street has irregular first-floor openings and a concrete platform where a two-story kitchen wing was once located. Other features no longer extant include a four-bay south-facing porch and a central cupola. In the yard to the east of the house, a frame, gable-roofed former garage faces south, with a fenced concrete-paved service area beyond it. This moved building is noncontributing. In recent years, the one-story front porch was sensitively rehabilitated, using a substantial amount of original material and maintaining the original design. Wildwood House has benefited from a series of appreciative owners and is well maintained. The sense of time and place the house conveys have contributed to its wide recognition in the community as an important historic asset.

EXTERIOR

The original front door of Wildwood House was used as the frontispiece illustration in *Old Saint Louis Homes 1764-1865: The Stories They Tell* by Elinor Martineau Coyle. It features a broad segmental-arched opening embracing the door and narrow sidelights, each topped by a semicircular arched light. The main fanlight over the front door is further subdivided by two arches supporting a circle, all glazed, as are the spandrels. The front door is deeply recessed within the entrance opening and articulated by slender colonnettes. The sidelights are leaded, each with a colored glass bull's eye and panels in the colors yellow, green, blue, and red. The lintels above the first floor windows within the porch and on the south side are straight but have scrolled broken pediments above them, centering on palmettes. The arched second-story windows have corresponding arched lintels and shutters. The louvered, black-painted shutters on both floors are correctly hinged, while the windows themselves are 6-over-6. There are cornice moldings above the windows with panels below. The north side windows are flat topped.

The porch features paired columns that are boxed and have capital moldings. Sometime between 1983 and 1998, judging by photographs, a wooden ornamental feature between the pairs of columns disappeared. It consisted of thin vertical strips linking two flat open circles about

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

**Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO**

Narrative Description (continued)

equally spaced along the height of the columns. The balustrade on the first floor is repeated as a balcony above the porch cornice. The paired brackets on the main cornice of the house are aligned with the porch posts and continue around all four sides of the house.

INTERIOR

There are four rooms on the first floor and four rooms on the second. The first-floor ceilings are twelve feet high. According to Harriet Lane Cates Hardaway, a great-granddaughter of the builders,¹ a T-shaped stairway was originally in the southwest corner of the house, with steps rising towards the south along the west wall to a landing on the south wall and then rising on the east wall to the second floor. That staircase was replaced before Ellen LaMotte's death in 1911 by the present center-hall staircase, which rises from east to west. Its date is reflected in the newel post, which is in the Romanesque Revival style, with acanthus leaves rising to a domed top.

The chimneypiece in the east parlor features paired fluted pilasters, a swag, and wreaths. The fireplace has a red brick hearth and surround. A second fireplace in the dining room, the northeast room, has lost its mantel and instead has exposed brick, now painted. Today heat comes from a forced air heating system, whose grates are oak.

One reaches the basement from the kitchen, which now occupies the southwest room, behind the stairs. Only part of the main house has a full basement, but cellar space continues under the back (now front) porch.

For its date, the house has a remarkable number of closets. The two rooms on the north side of the hall are separated by closets, one of which has been turned into a powder room. Between the north bedrooms is a door with closets on either side. The southeast bedroom has two closets, with doors of different sizes.

SECONDARY BUILDING

The clapboarded building in the northeast corner of the back yard is said to have been moved from property now on the west side of Dames Court, where it was a garage, but as currently situated it is not accessible to vehicles. It has four hinged doors. The concrete pad on the east side has been screened by a board fence.

CONDITION

Since the family sold the property in 1928, the house has gradually lost much of its setting and some of its features. According to Mrs. Hardaway, Eugene Zeppenfeld, who bought the house in 1928, removed the two-story kitchen wing, which had suffered a fire, and painted the house white to disguise the building joins on the street frontage. The wing had south-facing porches

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO

Narrative Description (continued)

with plain spindle railings on both floors, in typical Missouri fashion.² Arthur Rekart, purchaser in 1956, removed the cupola or widow's walk. It was an open square that could be reached through the attic, surrounded by the same railing as the porches, and its roof was edged with a scalloped trim similar to an awning. Rekart also closed most of the fireplaces and replaced the pine floors with oak. Carol Love and Al Bromley, beginning in 1988, rewired and upgraded the electrical service, tuckpointed and waterproofed the chimneys, reinforced some basement walls, and patched the roof. Barrietta Killiebrew purchased the property in 1998 and with her mother Carol Austin has completed renovation of the first floor and second floor foyer, including refinishing floors, repairing plaster, and rewallpapering. They have also dismantled and thoroughly rehabilitated the original front porch, individually copying each piece of wood that needed to be replaced. The porch's appearance now is indistinguishable from photographs taken in 1965, 1970, and 1983 in the collections of the St. Louis County Department of Parks & Recreation, except for the improved condition of the paint and the omission of the pattern of circles between the columns mentioned above

Wildwood House is not now exactly as it was built a hundred and fifty years ago. Among Italianate houses of its type in St. Louis County, however, it remains one of the most impressive.³

NOTES

1. Harriet Lane Cates Hardaway, "Wildwood," *Florissant Valley Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 1-6. Mrs. Hardaway was uniquely well informed about matters concerning Mullanphy descendants. She was the daughter of Elizabeth Patterson LaMotte and John Mullanphy Cates (1864-1916), both descendants of John Mullanphy. Mrs. Hardaway's grandmothers, Harriet Chénie LaMotte (1845-1878) and Catherine Clemens Cates (1840-1900), married the same man as their second husband, General Daniel Marsh Frost (1823-1890), in 1874 and 1880 respectively. Mrs. Hardaway's mother was thus the half-sister of Harriet Frost Fordyce (1876-1960), the longtime chatelaine of Hazelwood, another Mullanphy estate near Florissant, where Mrs. Hardaway spent much of her youth.

2. *ibid*, pp. 2 & 3. This description is somewhat garbled in the *Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue*, edited by Dorothy J. Caldwell (Columbia, Missouri: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1963), p. 163.

3. Compare *The Past In Our Presence: Historic Buildings In St. Louis County* (St. Louis: St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1996), pp. 13, 23, 26, 44-49.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO

SUMMARY

Wildwood House, located at 40 Dames Court in the City of Ferguson, Missouri, was built in 1857 as the country home of Major Joseph LaMotte and his wife Ellen Chambers LaMotte, and it remained a country showplace until the Hartnett Place subdivision was built around it in 1956. In spite of this change in its setting and the loss of some original features (a cupola and service wing), Wildwood House remains an impressive example of the Italianate style as it was popular in the St. Louis area in the mid-19th century. As such it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type and period, with significance in the area of Architecture. Its period of significance is its date of construction, 1857. Wildwood House has long been recognized as one of the historic jewels of St. Louis County and is being nominated at the local level of significance.¹

THE ITALIANATE

As early as 1957, John Maass, in *The Gingerbread Age*, correctly observed that the Italian Villa, the asymmetrical, towered house ostensibly based on the farmhouses of Tuscany, was only one aspect of the revival of Italian Renaissance forms in the second quarter of the 19th century: "A second distinctive type of Italianate villa is shaped like a cube with a lookout atop the flat roof."² Wildwood House is a fine example of this important house type. More recently, Virginia and Lee McAlester, in their *Field Guide to American Houses*, noted that this house type was more than just a footnote: "The Italianate style dominated American houses constructed between 1850 and 1880."³

Nevertheless, recognition has been long in coming. In spite of its importance to American architecture, the Italianate style has never been the subject of a major monograph, as have the Georgian, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival and Queen Anne styles, for example. And when the Italianate style has been discussed in general histories of American architecture, if it has been mentioned at all, it has usually been represented by the Italian Villa. This is true, for example, of the books by David P. Handlin, Leland Roth, Vincent Scully, and Marcus Whiffen & Frederick Koeper.⁴ In all these cases, the Italian Villa seems to fit the authors' broader framework of the Romantic, picturesque movement, following and contrasting with movements based on symmetrical classicism. The center-entry, symmetrical, hip-roofed Italianate house that was much more common at that time doesn't fit this (flawed) paradigm because it continues the tradition that can be traced back through the Greek Revival and Federal styles to the Palladian and Wrenian houses of the Colonial era.

In Marcus Whiffen's other book on this subject, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (MIT Press, 1969, rev., 1992), he divides the style into three categories for the 1820-1860 period: Renaissance Revival-Romano-Tuscan Mode, Renaissance Revival-North Italian Mode, and Italian Villa; with the High Victorian Italianate coming in 1860-1890.⁵ The National

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO

Significance (continued)

Register follows Whiffen in classifying the Italian Villa as a mid-19th-century style and the Italianate as Late Victorian. In fact, they were two sides of the same movement, which, as Alan Gowans notes in *Styles and Types of North American Architecture*, "becomes prominent on the American architectural scene well before the Civil War."⁶ This has been noted in several of the stylebooks that the preservation movement has fostered, including the McAlesters, mentioned above, and John Poppeliers, et al, *What Style Is It?* Poppeliers writes, "At its most elaborate the Italianate house had a low roof, overhanging eaves with decorative brackets, an entrance tower, round-headed windows with hood moldings, corner quoins, arcaded porches and balustraded balconies. At its simplest, it was a square house with low pyramidal roof, bracketed eaves and perhaps a cupola or lantern."⁷

The McAlesters define the Italianate house based on features actually observed in the field. Among the characteristic features seen at Wildwood House are the two-story height, the low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves having decorative brackets beneath; tall, although not particularly narrow, windows, arched above (on the second floor); windows with elaborated crowns of an inverted U shape. Originally Wildwood House also had a square cupola. Its principal areas of elaboration are windows, cornices, the porch, including the porch-support columns, and the front doorway. The full-width, single-story entry porch has paired square posts. A feature that makes the front elevation particularly attractive is the way the large looping shapes of the porch railings match the arches of the front door and the scrolls of the brackets.

In St. Louis, the heyday of the Italianate style was the decade from 1850 to 1860, as celebrated by Lawrence Lowie in his groundbreaking book, *The Architectural Heritage of St. Louis 1803-1891*.⁸ In fact, the Italianate remained one of the dominant styles locally well into the 1880s; George I. Barnett's warehouse and retail building designs continued to be Italianate until the end of his career. In St. Louis County, examples of the style appeared in the new suburbs created by the opening of the railroads in the 1850s, including Kirkwood, Webster Groves, and Ferguson.⁹ The transition from Greek Revival was gradual, however, and many houses of this era timidly apply Italianate brackets and porches to Greek Revival bodies.¹⁰ Away from the railroads in the country, a fullblown Italianate house such as the Wilson Larimore House near Spanish Lake, was apt to be a product of city financial interests rather than farming.¹¹

HISTORY

Wildwood House sits in the northwest part of Survey 393, also called the Maligne Tract, which encompassed 800 arpents or about 680 acres lying on Maline ("Maligne") Creek. Survey 393 was granted to John Wendel Engle (or Angel) in 1799 by Spanish Lt. Governor, Don Carlos Dehault Delassus. Engle sold 600 arpents of the survey to James Rankin and later sold the remaining 200 arpents to Simon Wood. After the Louisiana Purchase, the U. S. land commission confirmed Survey 393 to Rankin and Wood. Rankin sold his 600 arpents in 1810 to Jeremiah

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

**Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO**

Significance (continued)

Connor, who sold it to John Mullanphy in 1819. Woods sold his 200 arpents in 1820 to Josiah McClanahan, who sold it two days later to John Mullanphy. Mullanphy thereby succeeded in reuniting the survey.¹²

John Mullanphy (1758-1831) was the grandfather of Ellen LaMotte, the builder of Wildwood House, and that gives the house an important association in the eyes of local history buffs, since Mullanphy was one of the most important figures in early St. Louis. Born in County Fermanagh, Ireland, Mullanphy migrated with his wife and first child to Philadelphia in 1792 and thence to Baltimore and Frankfort, Kentucky before continuing on to St. Louis in 1804.¹³ His Catholic religion and a knowledge of French gained as a youth in the Irish Brigade in Paris made Mullanphy welcome in the newly American town. But the source of his wealth was his shrewd trading in cotton at the conclusion of the War of 1812, when the commodity was scarce in English mills. The cash he thus earned enabled him to invest extensively in St. Louis and Florissant real estate. His fortune was ultimately thought to exceed those of the Chouteaus and the Lucases. He devoted much of his wealth to charity, inducing the Ladies of the Sacred Heart to establish a school in St. Louis (later known as City House and now Villa Duchesne) and the Sisters of Charity to manage his St. Louis Mullanphy Hospital (now DePaul Hospital).

Three of Mullanphy's seven daughters and at least four of his grandchildren built country estates in the fertile lands surrounding Florissant. They were for a long time noted features of this portion of the county, but today only two survive. The other is Taille de Noyer, which was largely built by Ellen LaMotte's parents, Charles Chambers and Jane Mullanphy Chambers, on land given by Jane's father, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 10, 1980 and is today a museum operated by the Florissant Valley Historical Society.¹⁴

Wildwood House came to Ellen Mullanphy Chambers La Motte (1818-1911) through a circuitous route. In 1830, John Mullanphy deeded the Maligne Tract, along with almost 120 adjacent acres, to his grandson, Owen Augustine Chambers.¹⁵ Owen had just been born the previous year. He died in 1841, while attending the Jesuit school in St. Louis. In 1850, Owen's nine surviving brothers and sisters divided this gift among themselves.¹⁶ Lot 7 went to Ellen, who was the eldest sister. Lot 8 went to the eldest brother, John Mullanphy Chambers (1822-1861), but he sold his 118 acres to Ellen's husband Major Joseph Hatch LaMotte in 1851 for \$3,292, giving the LaMottes a total of 200 acres.

Ellen LaMotte and her husband built Wildwood in about 1857 upon his retirement from military service.¹⁷ Major LaMotte sent a letter to his wife in 1855, instructing that no trees be cut down but that construction should start soon. In October 1856, he resigned from the army. In May 1857, Mrs. LaMotte wrote in her prayerbook, "At Wildwood, our country place on the Maline."¹⁸ Although the house was then occupied, the development of the estate is said to have been

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO

Significance (continued)

interrupted during the Civil War.

Major LaMotte (1808-1888), a native of North Carolina, graduated from West Point in 1827 and served chiefly with the First Infantry. He met Ellen while stationed at Jefferson Barracks, and they married in 1842. He fought in the Mexican War and was breveted major for gallant conduct in several conflicts at Monterey, in one of which he was severely wounded. The LaMottes had two sons and three surviving daughters.¹⁹

From 1875 to 1885, Major and Mrs. LaMotte had a town house in St. Louis, located at the southeast corner of Grand and Washington Avenues, in addition to "Wildwood." After the Major's death, his widow Ellen continued to live at "Wildwood" with their daughter, Ellen Jane (called Nellie, 1857-1911), who in 1884 had married Thomas Henry Coppinger (1854-1926) of Alton. Ellen died on February 16, 1911 at the age of 92, having outlived three of her six children. In addition to Ellen Coppinger, the survivors were Margaret Caroline, who had become Sister Mary Wilfred of the Sisters of Loretto, and Mary Louise, the wife of Charles C. Spalding. Both lived in Kentucky. Through Ellen's deceased son Francis Xavier LaMotte (1843-1868), a grandchild and a great-grandchild also survived. Francis X. had left a son and a daughter. The daughter, Elizabeth Patterson LaMotte (born 1867), married a cousin, John Mullanphy Cates (1864-1916). The son, Joseph Soulard LaMotte, had died in 1894, leaving one child, Harriet Chénié LaMotte (born 1889). In 1912, she married Theodore Hunt, of the pioneer Lucas and Hunt families.

Nellie LaMotte Coppinger died less than a month after her mother, on March 11, 1911, leaving the house to her husband and their two sons and three daughters. Thomas Coppinger survived until 1926, but he moved out of "Wildwood" after a few years, leaving the house prey to vandals. During this time the local children referred to the house as haunted and frequently played there.²⁰

In 1928, the Coppinger heirs, who were by then spread around the country, sold a portion of the estate including the house to Eugene W. Zeppenfeld, who was a teacher at McKinley High School in St. Louis.²¹ He and his wife Mary made improvements to the house, including the restoration of part of the porch railing and the repair of the roof and chimney. They also removed the kitchen wing, which had been damaged, and they painted the entire house white. Access to the house was from the west, or back, by way of Hartnett Avenue, which had been laid out in 1891.²²

By this time, the city of Ferguson was beginning to edge out toward the Wildwood estate. Ferguson traced its origins to the construction of a station on the North Missouri Railroad line that ran through Thomas Ferguson's farm on the so-called New Florissant Road.²³ This line, later supplemented by streetcar lines, provided rapid access to downtown St. Louis and opened

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

**Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO**

Significance (continued)

up the area to settlement by commuters. By 1894, when it incorporated, Ferguson was one of the most fashionable suburbs, with one of the county's first high schools.²⁴

After World War II, Ferguson's proximity to some of the region's largest employers, including McDonnell Aircraft, the Hazelwood Ford factory, and Emerson Electric, spurred even more rapid development. This was reflected in the immediate surroundings of Wildwood House. The Zeppenfelds sold the property in 1955 to Henry Cernicek. He then subdivided it as Hartnett Place, working through the Jerjan Construction Company, and linking the new Dames Court to Hartnett Avenue by way of a short street named for himself.²⁵ The subdivision was arranged to permit Wildwood House to remain on Lot 17.

Arthur Rekart, an engineer for KXOK, bought the property in 1956. He and his wife Helen closed most of the fireplaces, removed the cupola, and replaced the pine floors with oak.²⁶ Later owners have included George Russell Adams (1977), Phillip J. and Julia K. Curry (1980), and Carol Love and her husband Alfred M. Bromley (1988), and Barrietta Killiebrew, the current owner (1998).²⁷

NOTES

1. Wildwood House was listed in the *Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue* in 1963 (edited by Dorothy J. Caldwell, Columbia, Missouri: the State Historical Society of Missouri, p. 163) and featured the following year in Elinor Martineau Coyle's *Old Saint Louis Homes 1764-1865: The Stories They Tell* (St. Louis: Folkestone Press, page 118 and 119 in the 1979 edition). The St. Louis County Historic Buildings Commission designated Wildwood House a county landmark in 1970 and has included it in all its subsequent publications, including the 1996 book, *The Past In Our Presence: Historic Buildings in St. Louis County*. In these early publications, the property is referred to simply as Wildwood, but the 1995 incorporation of the large municipality of Wildwood in St. Louis County has created confusion over the identify of this property; the word "House" has been added here, as is frequently done in conversion, to differentiate this property from the city.

2. John Maass, *The Gingerbread Age* (New York: Bramhall House, 1957), p. 98.

3. Virginia McAlester & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide To American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 212.

4. David P. Handlin, *American Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985); Leland Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979); Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988); Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture, 1607-1976* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

**Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO**

Significance (continued)

5. Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969, rev., 1992), pp. 68-82 and 97.
6. Alan Gowans, *Styles and Types of North American Architecture* (New York: Icon Editions, 1992), p. 188.
7. John Poppeliers, S. Allen Chambers, Jr., Nancy B. Schwartz, *What Style Is It?: A Guide to American Architecture* (Washington, D. C.: Preservation Press, 1977); quote from 1979 edition, page 20.
8. Lawrence Lowic, *The Architectural Heritage of St. Louis 1803-1891* (St. Louis: Washington University Gallery of Art, 1982), "The Italianate City: 1850-1860," pp. 47-68, and *passim*.
9. *The Past In Our Presence: Historic Buildings In St. Louis County* (St. Louis: St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1996), see especially pp. 13, 23, 26, 44-49
10. Among National Register properties this is true of the Archambault House in Florissant, c. 1850, and the Hawken House in Webster Groves, 1857. Other county landmark examples pictured in the *Past In Our Presence* include the Tunstall-Douglas in North County, c. 1855 (p. 25), and the St. Cin House in Hazelwood, 1850s (p. 26).
11. National Register February 10, 1989; *Past In Our Presence*, p. 23.
12. St. Louis City (formerly County) Recorder of Deeds, Book C, page 95; Book H, page 326; Book I, pages 258, 259, and 280.
13. William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, ed., *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*. New York, etc.: Southern History Company, 1899, pp. 1591-1593.
14. "Taille de Noyer" is illustrated, *inter alia*, in *The Past In Our Presence: Historic Buildings In St. Louis County* (St. Louis County [MO] Department of Parks and Recreation, 1996), p. 10.
15. St. Louis City (formerly County) Recorder of Deeds, Book S, page 405.
16. St. Louis City (formerly County) Recorder of Deeds, Book S⁵, page 398.
17. Alfred G. Etter, "Wildwood: A Study in Historical Ecology," *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* (Volume 40, September, 1953), pp. 227-258.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

**Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO**

Significance (continued)

18. Harriet Lane Cates Hardaway, "Wildwood," *Florissant Valley Historical Society Quarterly* (Vol. 13, no. 2, July 1971), p. 2.

19. Hardaway, "Wildwood," pp. 5-7; also Harriet Lane Cates Hardaway, *The Descendants of John Mullanphy, St. Louis Philanthropist* (privately published, 1940), p. 20. This genealogical work is also the source of family data in the paragraphs below.

20. Elinor Martineau Coyle, *Old Saint Louis Homes 1764-1865: The Stories They Tell* (St. Louis: Folkestone Press, 1979), pp. 118-119; Carol Love and Al Bromley, publication advertising the history and sale of "Wildwood" (undated).

21. St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 894, pages 568 and 571.

22. Hartnett Avenue was part of the Darst Place Subdivision, laid out by Joseph Darst in 1891, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Plat Book 3, page 20.

23. Irene Sanford Smith, *Ferguson: A City and Its People* (Ferguson, Missouri: Ferguson Historical Society, 1976); Ferguson Historical Society, *Ferguson, A City Remembered: Pictorial History* (Ferguson Historical Society, 1994); Berkley Kalin, "A History of Ferguson, Missouri 1855-1918," (St. Louis University M. A. Thesis, 1960); Beverly Ann Fleming, "Ferguson: A Community Profile," (St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation, 1984).

24. The Ferguson School or Central School was listed in the National Register on September 7, 1984.

25. St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 3421, page 598; Book 3641, page 325; Plat Book 76, page 44.

26. Love & Bromley.

27. St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 7006, page 2235; Book 7243, page 1881; Book 7861, page 2483; Book 8359, page 2189; Book 11855, page 2287.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9, 10 Page 11

**Wildwood House
St. Louis County, MO**

Bibliography

- Caldwell, Dorothy J. *Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue*. Columbia, Mo.: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1963, p. 163.
- Coyle, Elinor Martineau. *Old Saint Louis Homes 1764-1865: The Stories They Tell*. St. Louis: Folkestone Press, 1979, pp. 118-119.
- Etter, Alfred G. "Wildwood: A Study in Historical Ecology," *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, Volume 40, September 1953, pp. 227-258.
- Hardaway, Harriet Lane Cates. *The Descendants of John Mullanphy, St. Louis Philanthropist*. St. Louis: privately published, 1940.
- Hardaway, Harriet Lane Cates. "Wildwood," *Florissant Valley Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 13, no. 2, July 1971.
- St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation. *The Past In Our Presence: Historic Buildings In St. Louis County*. St. Louis County, Mo.: Department of Parks and Recreation, 1996, p. 28.

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 17, Hartnett Place, more fully described as: Beginning at a point in the West line of Forestwood No. 3, a subdivision in St. Louis County, Missouri, recorded in Plat Book 61, Page 12, distant North 5 degrees 41 minutes East, 343.99 feet more or less from a stone at the most Southwest corner of Forestwood No. 3, said point of beginning being the Southeast corner of a lot bearing number 17 on the plat of Hartnett Place, a subdivision recorded in Plat Book 76, Page 44 of the St. Louis County Recorder's Office, thence North 80 degrees 05 minutes West 230.96 feet to a point, thence North 3 degrees 18 minutes West 93.64 feet to a point, thence North 86 degrees 42 minutes East 247.99 feet to the West line of Forestwood No. 3, aforesaid, thence South 5 degrees 41 minutes West along said West line, 148.26 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This is the last remaining portion of the original "Wildwood" estate.

WILDWOOD HOUSE FERGUSON, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI

First Floor Plan

















