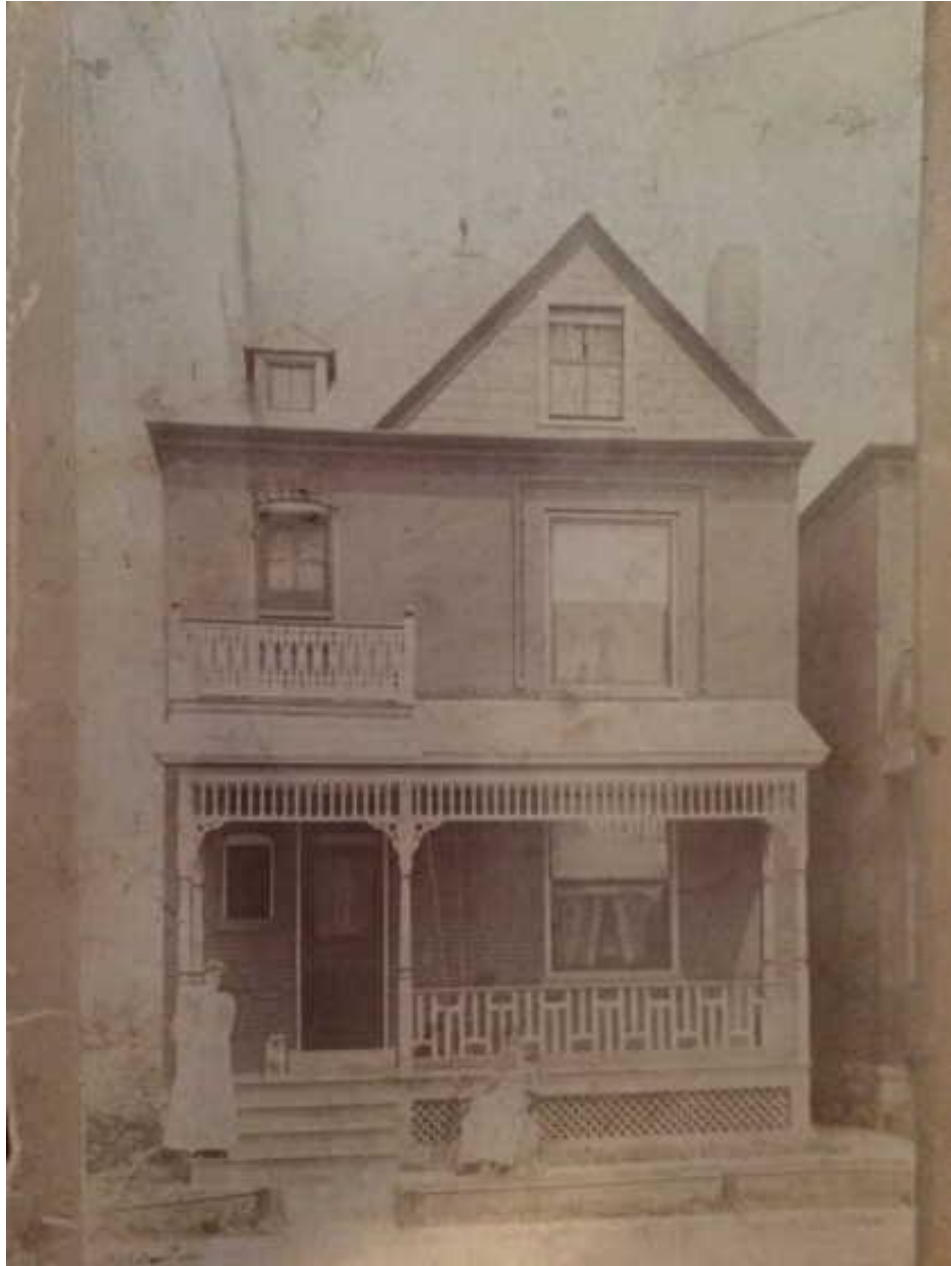




LANDMARKS

ASSOCIATION *of* SAINT LOUIS

House History of 2356 Virginia Avenue, St. Louis, MO



2356 Virginia Ave., undated

Source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 28 Oct 2020

Section 1: The Home & the Neighborhood

2356 Virginia Ave, City Block 1435, Lot 27

***Overview of Tower Grove East adapted from the Tower Grove East Historic District National Register of Historic Places District nomination [Landmarks Association, Andrew Weil, 2012, (Sec 7 p2-3)].**

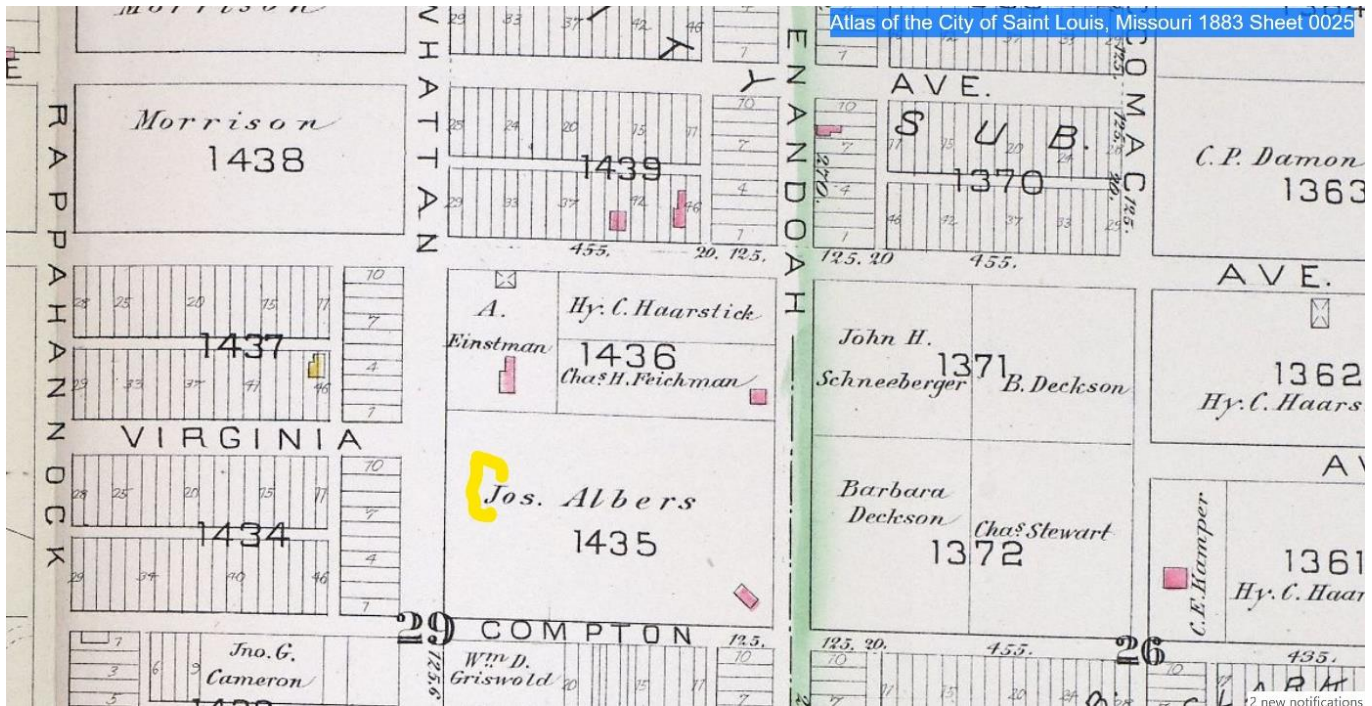
Tower Grove East is dominated by residential architecture and contains a mix of working and middle- (and upper-middle) class property types that range from humble, one-story shotgun houses and early homes that reflect Missouri German vernacular building traditions to large, high-style mansions such as might be found in some of the city's wealthy private places.

The Tower Grove East neighborhood is situated in a transitional zone where the development patterns of the "walking city" meet those of the streetcar era. The land the neighborhood occupies was originally commons that were set aside for public use by the city's French founders. Subdivision and sale by the City began in 1838, and in 1855 the land was annexed as part of the city proper. By 1875 there was a scattering of country estates established in the area, as well as several residences that were situated along the major farm-to-market thoroughfare of Gravois Avenue. Early residences from the decades surrounding the Civil War still exist in the neighborhood and reflect this diffuse development pattern.



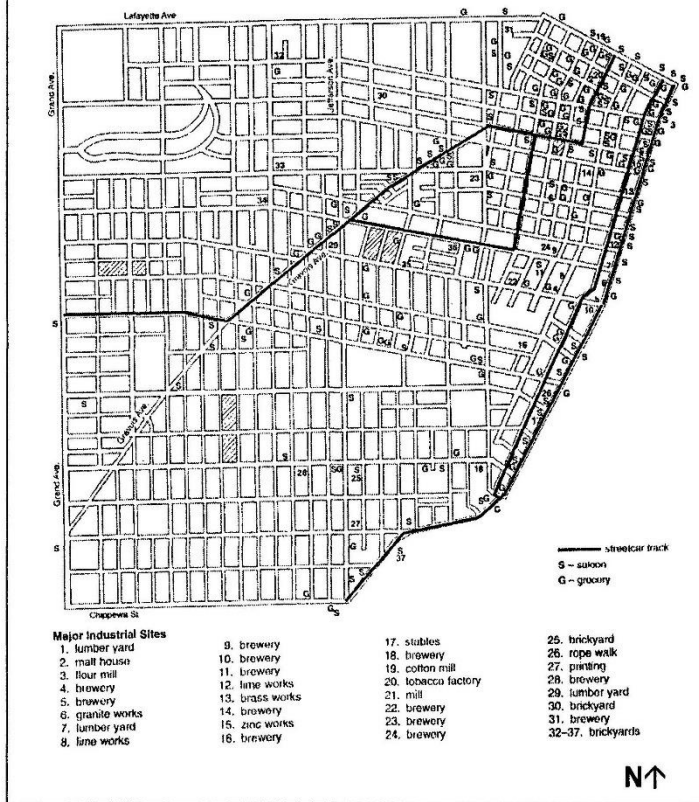
1875 Pictorial St. Louis, the great metropolis of the Mississippi valley; a topographical survey drawn in perspective A.D. 1875 [[Image 64/Plate 60](#)]

The above 1875 Compton and Dry topographic/bird's eye map highlights the large, country estates and the bigger development starting around Gravois Road. The red circle marks the eventual location of 2356 Virginia Ave. It is situated across from the 1869 Italianate country house of Andrew and Laura Einstman (2), which is still in this location. The eventual house is located on Joseph Albers land, whose home was on the corner of Shenandoah and Compton (1). His son, Joseph Albers was bequeathed the land, known as the farm property, after his father's death. The 1883 Hopkins Atlas of the City shows the primary boundaries of Joseph Albers property. At that time, Virginia Ave was not laid out and Sidney Street was known as Powhattan, and Rappahannock became Magnolia Avenue after 1893.



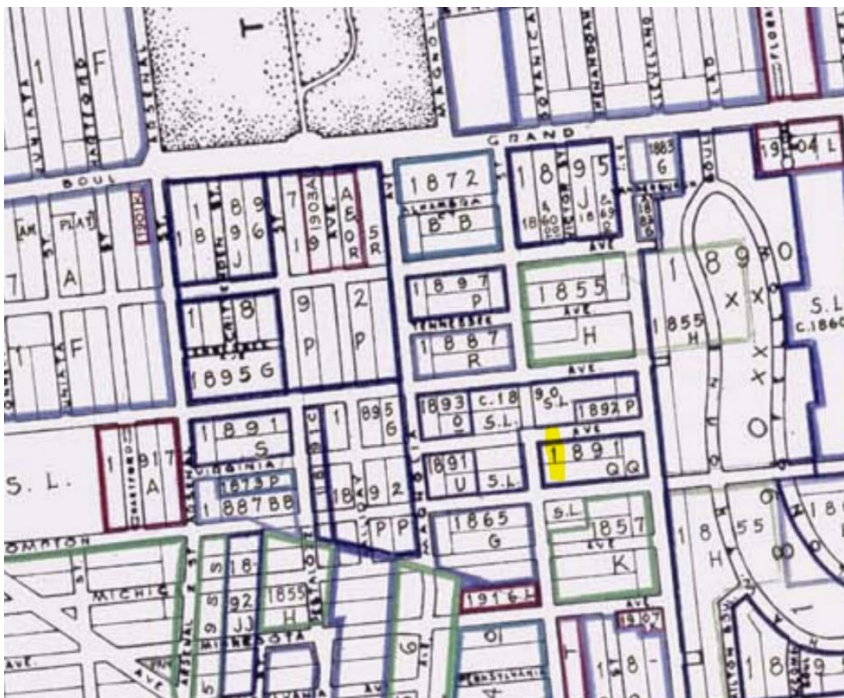
1883 Hopkins Atlas of the City, 1883, Sheet 0025 [FIMO]
Eventual location of 2356 Virginia Ave. highlighted in yellow.

Figure 8: 1880 Streetcar Lines in South St. Louis
Eric Sandweiss, *St. Louis: The Evolution of an American Urban Landscape*



1880 South St. Louis Historic Working- and Middle-Class Streetcar Suburbs MPDF, sec E, p 23.

The electric streetcar transformed the area by the late 1880s. In 1880, streetcar service ran along Gravois Road only as far south as Arsenal Street. Like many western portions of St. Louis, the electric streetcar became the major impetus to the development of South St. Louis. Older estates and former farmland were sold off to early prospectors and developers trying to find areas that would strike big. Development grew especially around amenities, such as Tower Grove Park, and Tower Grove East was prime real estate. The 1880 Streetcar Lines map shows the streetcar going down Gravois and west on Arsenal. Key streets with streetcar lines, such as Grand Blvd., became commercial strips. This provided more amenities for the increasing surrounding residential development.

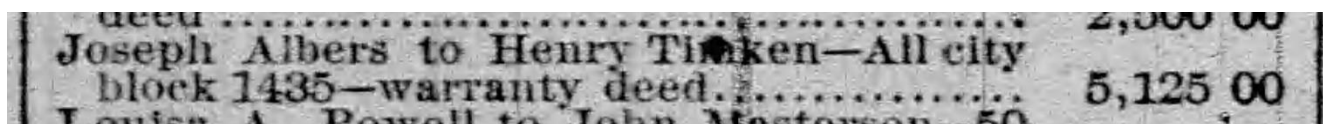


City Block 1435 is in the Shenandoah Addition. It took six years for the upswing of residential development; from 1884 to 1891 when the block was subdivided. The 1967 Wayman Map illustrates that the block was subdivided in 1891 and the Dark Blue outline indicates it was established in Decade 1890-1899.

[Wayman map - IV · WUSTL Digital Gateway Image Collections & Exhibitions](#)

(2356 Virginia Ave's location highlighted in yellow)

Not including the original land sales by the City, there are 25 identifiable subdivisions in the Tower Grove East Historic District dating between the 1850s and about 1916. These subdivisions were platted with alleys and a grid of streets oriented to the cardinal directions. Gravois Avenue, located at the southern end of the neighborhood, is the exception, with a diagonal northeast-southwest orientation that dates at least to the Territorial Period and perhaps much earlier. A little less than half of the subdivisions in the area date to peak years of construction (the 1890s in particular) and the remainder were platted prior to major development interest in the area. While homes were occasionally built on individual or double lots in these early years, these subdivisions generally sat waiting for builders for several decades before most of their lots were finally built upon. This situation resulted in streetscapes that contain groups of buildings constructed by professional developers in the early 20th century along with substantial numbers of buildings dating to the 1890s, 1880s, 1870s, 1860s, or even earlier.



St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 02 Sep 1884, Tue, Page 9, “Real Estate Transfers” City block 1435

This delayed development was somewhat the case for this block of Virginia Ave. The street was named for the state of Virginia in the subdivision of the St. Louis Commons in 1854 under the policy of naming north-south streets after states of the Union and by 1883 the street name officially extended down to the River des Peres.¹ In 1884, Joseph Albers sold all of block 1435 via warranty deed to Henry Timken² for \$5,125.³ Timken sat on the land for 6 years, 5 months, 19 days and during that time he graded the land and added shade trees. He then sold it for a large profit in 1891 to Empire Real Estate Co. for \$24,000.⁴ Empire, run by Henry Hiemenz Jr., planned to name it Shenandoah Place and started platting it into lots to sell at auction in the spring. As noted, the area is changing due to the increase in transportation. During this time, even the paper noted the lots will sell well, because “as the electric line along California Avenue places the property within easy access of the business center.”

SOLD A CITY BLOCK FOR \$24,000.
City block No. 1435, bounded by Shenandoah street on the north, Compton avenue on the east, Powhattan on the south and Virginia avenue on the west, has been purchased by the Empire Real Estate Co., and will hereafter be known as Shenandoah place. There are five acres in the tract, and it has been graded and nicely ornamented with shade trees for some time past. These improvements were made by Henry Timken, the grantor, who was represented in the sale to the Empire Investment Co. by John Grether. The company's interests were looked after by Henry Hiemenz, Jr., the price paid for the land being \$24,000. It is now being platted into lots which are to be disposed of at auction early in the spring, and there is no doubt that they will sell well, as the electric line along California avenue places the property within easy access of the business center.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 05 Mar 1891, Thu, Page 5, “Real Estate Interests: Sold a City Block for \$24,000”.

There were three more property investors and short-term parties before the first family moved into the house at 2356 Virginia Avenue. The first was John S. King, a relator or broker who sold property around the city. He had

¹ Dr. Glen Holt and Tom Pearson, **ST. LOUIS STREETS INDEX (1994)**, p126-127 [http://rbsc.slpl.org/STL_STREETS_\(A-Z\).pdf](http://rbsc.slpl.org/STL_STREETS_(A-Z).pdf)

² Timken resided on Waverly Place and was invested in transportation. He was the President of the Varney Carriage Company in 1884, and in 1887 the patentee of the “Timken Patent Spring Vehicles” and one of the vice-presidents of the Carriage-Builders’ National Association. By 1887, he and his wife moved to California.

³ St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 02 Sep 1884, Tue, Page 9, “Real Estate Transfers” City block 1435. Newspapers.com

⁴ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 05 Mar 1891, Thu, Page 5, “Real Estate Interests: Sold a City Block for \$24,000”. Newspapers.com

an office at 622 Chestnut. He owned the vacant property from 1891 to 1894. He sold the lot [27] for around \$1750 to Benjamin F. Waggoner, a local developer.⁵

Waggoner was awarded the contracts to build two brick buildings on the east side of Virginia Ave for \$5,000 with a building permit dated October 10, 1894 [image in Sec 3]. 2356 Virginia was constructed in late 1894 to early 1895. At this time [Nov. 14, 1894], its lot, lot 27, and the adjacent lot 28 were assigned their street numbers via the St. Louis City Building Department House Numbering Certificates.⁶ The certificate notes the owner of the lots as Benjamin F. Waggoner to Missouri State Mutual Ins. Co. [see image below].

23835

House No. 2356, 2358

Benjamin F. Waggoner Owner

E. side of Virginia av.

Between Shenandoah av.

and Sidney str.

Lot No. 27, 28

City Block No. 1435

St. Louis, Nov. 14th 1894

23835

Office No. _____ Certificate No. 23835

Block No. 1435 Beginning No. 2300

Lot No. 27, 28

House No. 2356, 2358

Name of Owner Benjamin F. Waggoner
to Missouri State Mutual Ins. Co.

WEST. Ave. Ave.

Virginia Street. Ave.

50' 40' 125'

28 27

SOUTH. Street. Street. NORTH.

Shenandoah

Compton Street. Ave.

EAST.

1894, Nov 14, St. Louis City Building Department House Numbering Certificates
St. Louis Public Library, Central Branch, St. Louis Room, certificate 23835

⁵ Waggoner also did two other 2-story buildings on the block in 1895 and parts of St. Vincent Ave (1894) which is located near the Compton Water Tower.

⁶ The certificates assign street numbers to new buildings ca. 1880-1976. The certificate includes the block number, lot number, house number, owner and contractor. Certificates also have a rough sketch of the property in relation to the street and a dated stamp of approval from the Street Department.

The third property owner was Adolph Herber, who only owned it for 8 months.⁷ Herber bought it in April 1895 for \$3,900 and then tried selling it by June 1895 at cost. It sat on the market until January 2nd, 1896, when Herber sold it at a loss at \$2500 to F. E. Niesen, the same person who assisted in its prior sale. It does not appear that he was involved in real estate. He is listed at the property in the 1896 City Directory, as working in dry goods at 2752 Arsenal [no longer extant].

F. E. Niesen sold house No. 2356 Virginia avenue, a seven-room Queen Anne residence, on a lot 25x125 feet, for \$3900, from B. F. Wagoner to John Heber for a home.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 10 Apr 1895, Wed, Page 4, "Real Estate: Sales". Newspapers.com

IMPROV'D CITY PROPERTY FOR SALE
 FOR SALE—Twelve per cent income property; no agent. Address A 53, Globe-Democrat.
 FOR SALE—A nice 7-room house, bath room and w. closet; all conveniences; also, nice stable; lot 25x125; must be sold. Apply to 2356 Virginia ave.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 19 Jun 1895, Wed, Page 8, "Improved City Property for Sale". Newspapers.com

VIRGINIA AVE.—25 feet, e. s., bet. Shenandoah and Sidney. city block 1435. Adolph Herber and wife to F. E. Niesen—warranty..... 2,500 00

St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 04 Jan 1896, Sat, Page 15, "Real Estate, Transferred Recorded: Virginia". Newspapers.com

During this time, newspapers were reporting these types of transactions. Real estate sales were down but building was up. One article, titled "Building Boom Goes Merrily On: shrewd investors are quietly buying realty" notes "Shrewd Capitalists" placing their surplus funds in the downtown and better class residence districts while prices were low.⁸

⁷ He was married to Augusta Young in 1892 and worked for Abraham Hostetter, an agent of Mayer & Loewenstein, varnish manufacturers in 1894 & 1895.

⁸ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 24 May 1896, Sun, Page 18, "Building Boom Goes Merrily On: This Weeks Transactions". [24 May 1896, Page 18 - St. Louis Post-Dispatch at Newspapers.com](http://Newspapers.com)



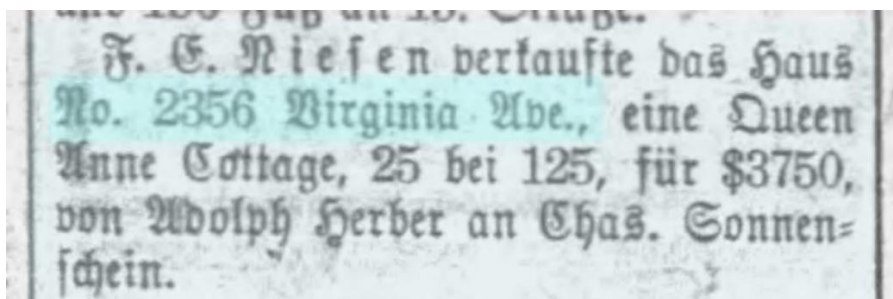
FREDERICK E. NIESEN (1856-1950).

J.C. Strauss Studio, 1930s in the collection of [Missouri Historical Society](#)

Frederick E. Niesen was a real estate agent/broker and public notary with an office at 705 Chestnut Street. To recap, he handled the sale of the house in 1895 for Waggoner, in 1896 for Herber [see clipping below] in which he bought it from Herber in January 1896, and then turned around and sold it at profit on May 14, 1896, for \$3,750. Niesen reported the sale for 2356 Virginia, listing it as a 7-room Queen Anne brick house on a 25x125 lot. He is listed as owning the property for four months before selling it to Katherine Sonnenschein. The German newspaper, Westliche Post, however, stated Niesen sold the home for Herber to Charles Sonnenschein [see clipping below].

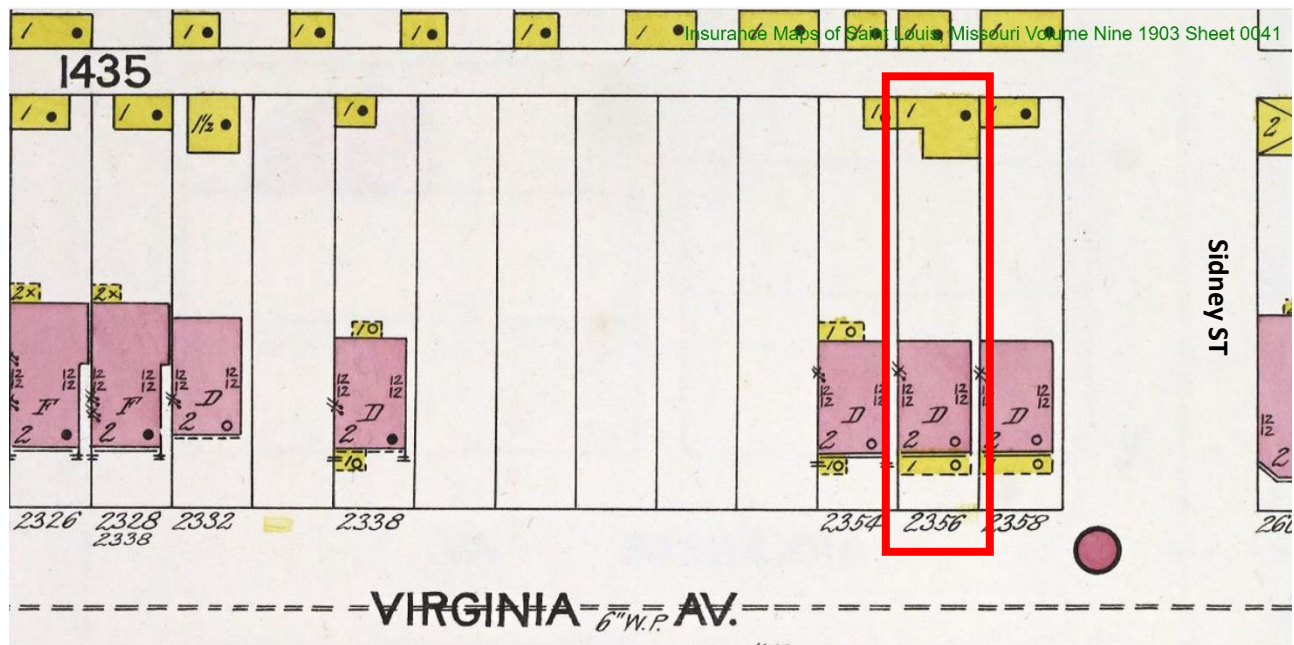


St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 19 Apr 1896, Sun, Page 20, "Improved city Property for Sale Compton Hill Home". [Newspapers.com](#)



"F. E. Niesen sold the house at No. 2356 Virginia Ave., a Queen Ann Cottage, 25 by 125 for \$3750, from Adolph Herber to Chas Sonnenschein"

Westliche Post (St. Louis, Missouri), 21 May 1896, Thu, Page 2, "From the Real Estate Market". [Newspapers.com](#)



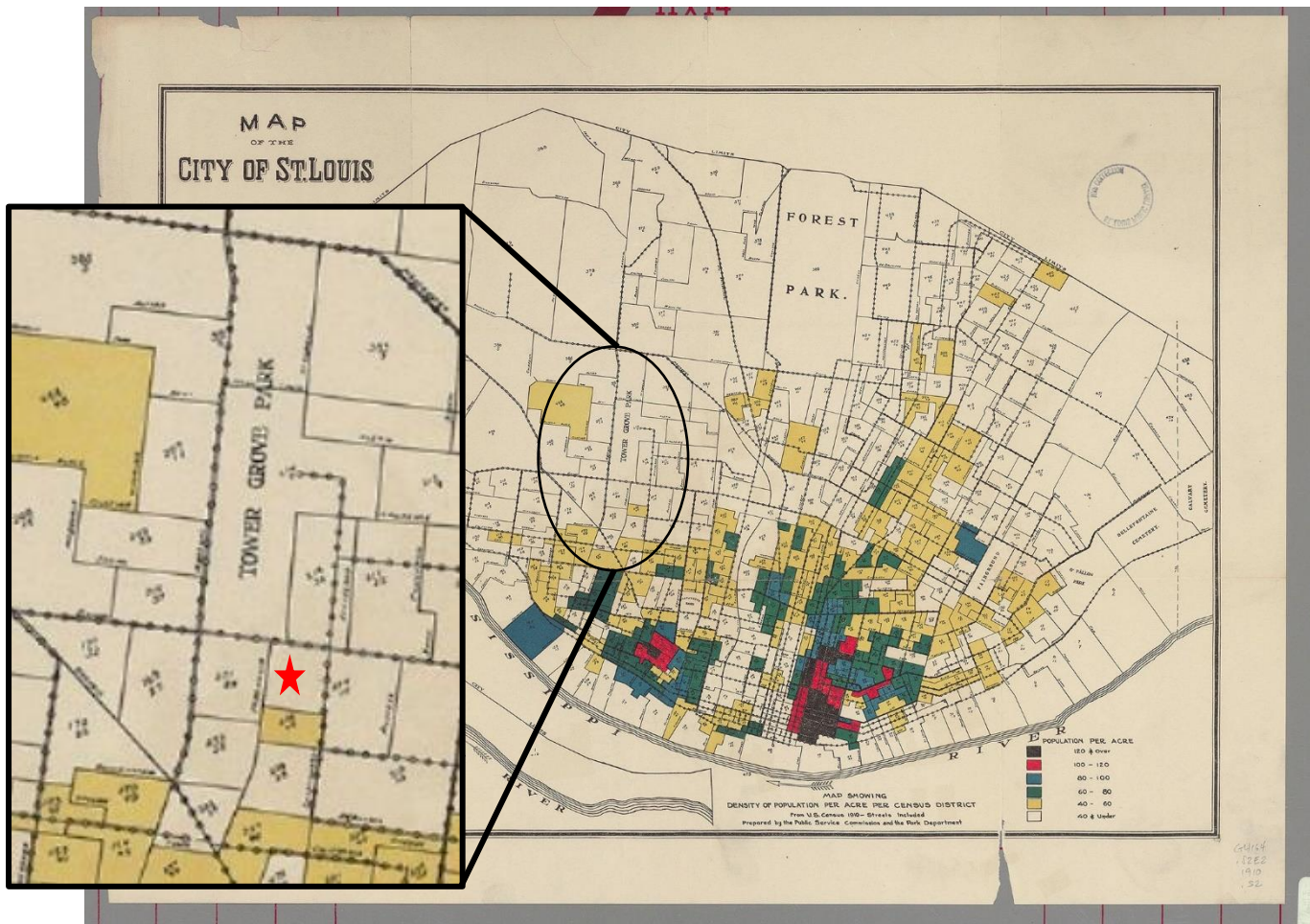
Sanborn Map, Vol 9, 1903; SHEET 41, [HIG - Fire Insurance Maps online \(slcl.org\)](http://HIG - Fire Insurance Maps online (slcl.org))

1903 Block Makeup: [Information based on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map]

- shows that Virginia Ave was not filled in at this time.
- Of the 18 lots on the eastern side of the block (same side as 2356 Virginia), there are 10 primary buildings [4 flats and 7 dwellings, i.e., multi-family vs single family].
- Of the 10 lots on the western side of the block, there are 7 primary buildings. [3 flats, 4 dwellings]. Lots are not uniform in size; the Einstman property is still large (2347 Virginia).

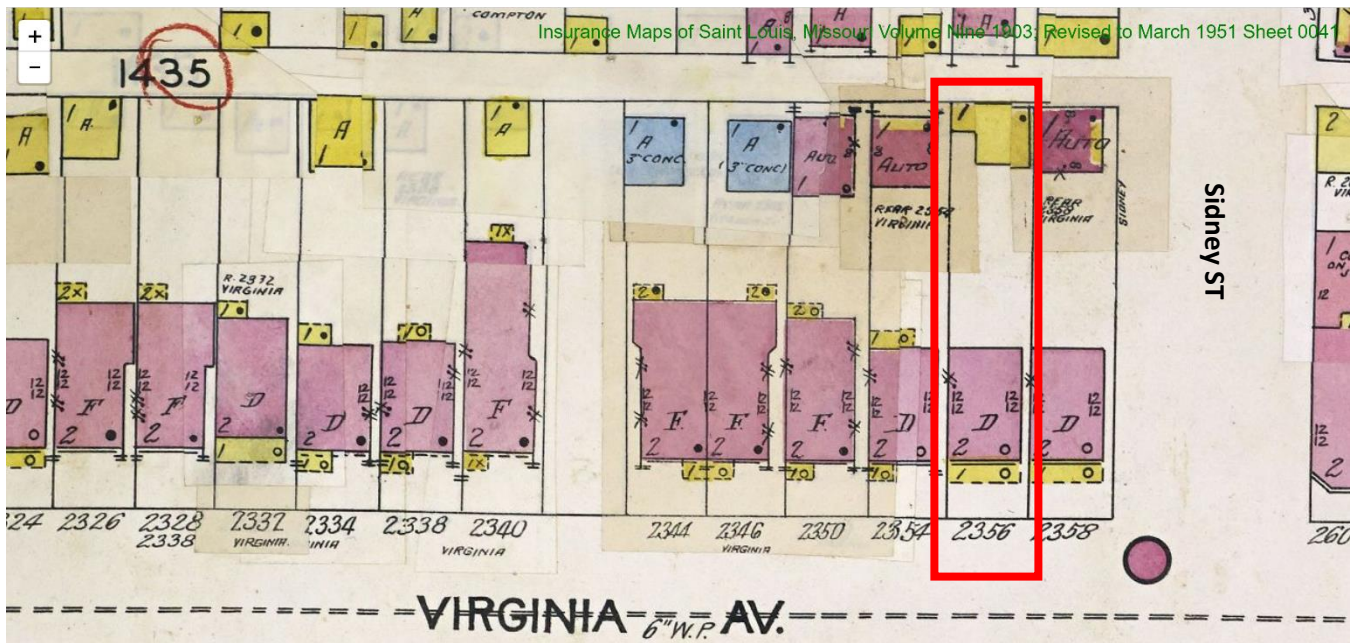
2356 Virginia:

- 2-story brick dwelling with a slate or metal roof [slate based on the newspaper article] and a brick or metal cornice on the front facade. The dwelling has 12inch thick walls on both floors and window openings in the 2nd story on the eastern/NE wall (The dot in the hatched line indicates an opening, counting from left to right looking toward the building). There is a 1-story frame porch with slate or metal roof on the front façade.
- At the rear of the property is a 1-story frame structure/outbuilding with a composition or gravel roof. It is not identified as a stable or a garage.



Map of the City of St. Louis, 1910. St. Louis, Mo.: Public Service Commission [Maps of Missouri \(slpl.org\)](http://slpl.org) [Based on 1910 census] The red star highlights the location of 2356 Virginia Ave.

The Map of the City of St. Louis [above] shows the population density of the city of St. Louis based on the 1910 census. The area surrounding Tower Grove Park is not dense at this time, with the population of the area per acre equaling 40 & under number of people [no color sections]. Just below the location of 2356 Virginia (starred on the map), there is a denser enclave of at least 40-60 people per acre (in yellow). According to the **1910 census**, this block of Virginia was a mixture of Americans from all over the US and first-generation Americans with German, Irish, French, Dutch, Scottish, and Austrian backgrounds.



Sanborn Map, Vol 9, 1903; Revised March 1951 SHEET 41, [HIG - Fire Insurance Maps online \(slcl.org\)](http://hig.slc.org)

1903 Block Makeup: [Information based on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map]

- The eastern half of the block is full except for one lot between 2340 and 2344 Virginia [2342 Virginia].
- Of the 18 lots on the eastern side of the block (same side as 2356 Virginia), there are 17 primary buildings [9 flats & 8 dwellings].
- Of the 10 lots on the western side of the block, there are 9+ primary buildings. [4 flats + a row of 3 flats facing Sidney, 5 dwellings]. At this time, 2347 Virginia is shown as converted into Flats and a row of three flats added to the southwestern half of the property. There is an empty lot between 2321 & 2329 Virginia [2323 Virginia] and no structure between 2347 Virginia and the 3300* Sidney.
- Neighboring lot 2354 Virginia had a fire in the early 1960s

2356 Virginia:

- The revised map does not depict any changes to the building since the 1903 map.

Current Block Makeup: [based on GEO St. Louis data, <http://dynamic.stlouis-mo.gov/>]

- The adjacent lot, 2354 Virginia, was condemned to demolished 07/25/1996 and was demolished 04/02/1997. By 2000 was LRA owned until recently (10/30/2017)
- The once vacant lot, 2342 Virginia, was built on in 1965
- The once vacant lot, 2323 Virginia, was built on in 1970
- The once vacant area SW of 2347 Virginia, 2352-2353 Virginia was built in 1963
- The Sidney Street flats [2-story, 6 family brick rowhouse] were listed vacant from 1993-1998 and were demolished 06/29/1998, and the empty lot became the Tower Grove East Community Garden.

Owners of 2356 Virginia Ave, City Block 1435, lot 27

Dates Owned	Property Owner	Notes	Days Owned
Unknown-1880/02/28	Albers, John Henry		
1880/02/28-1884/08/19	Albers, Joseph & wife		2364 days
1884/08/19-1891/02/07	Timken, Henry & wife Sue Diego Col	He didn't live there. Resided at Waverly Place. He invested in land	2363 days
1891/02/07-1891/05/19	Empire Investment Co.		101 days
1891/05/19-1894/09/28	King, John S.	relator/property investor	1228 days
1894/09/28-1895/04/08	Waggoner, Benjamin F.	investor/builder [This is when the plots are given an Address via address certificate)	192 days
1895/04/08-1896/01/02	Herber, Adolph and Augusta	paper notes Waggoner sold to John Heber by broker F. E. Niesen	269 days
1896/01/02-1896/5/14	Niesen, F. E. and Julia	F. E. Niesen was the real estate broker that sold the house in 1895 & 1896	123 days
1896/05/14-1926/02/24	Sonnenschein, Katherine (wife of Charles)	Henry Pleus admin, (son-in-law), at time of sale	10,877 days
1926/02/24-1938/09/21	Pleus, Laura	house went to daughter because parents are both dead	4592 days
1938/09/21-1950/05/20	Foote, Eleanor B.		4259 days
1950/05/20-1955/09/18	Davidson, Mary J.	(single)	1947 days
1955/09/18-1962/06/05	Davidson, Artie V. & Doris J.		2452 days
1962/06/05-1976/02/12	Coke, Claus C. & Leola/Lola Mae	Sale: by Joseph J. Becker, Suc Tr U/F	5000 days
1976/02/12-1976/03/15	The National Life & Accident Insurance Co., Davidson, Tenn.		32 days
1976/03/15-1976/06/29	Sec House & Urban Dev. Washington DC	Sale: Carla A. Hills, Sec House & Urban Dev. Washington DC (HUD)	106 days
1976/06/29-1984/10/20	Dickey, David L. & Rebecca S., & Lola Hebenstreit, JT		3400 days
1984/10/20-2003/07/08	Cartwright, Inez	(single)	6835 days
2003/07/08-2019/02/08	Hargrove, Eugene & Patricia	Patricia Hargrove (DIED 03/06/2018), Eugene Owner/Affiant 2/8/2019 & sold	5694 days
2019/02/08-2019/02/08	Askins Development Group LLC	5753-G Santa Ana Canyon, Anaheim, CA 92807	0 days
2019/02/08-2019/02/14	Shaw Holdings Group LLC	5753-G Santa Ana Canyon, Anaheim, CA 92807	6 days
Current	O'Loughlin, Diedra & Miguel De Faria		

Information collected via the Assessors office at St. Louis City Hall

Notes:

- The colors only denote relationships, primarily related family with the latter being a California business that changed names to blend into their neighborhood surroundings.
- The residents with the longest duration in the house are the original family: Sonnenschein/Pleus, which were there for around 42 years. The second was Inez Cartwright at 18 years, followed by Eugene & Patricia Hargrove at 15 years.

Section 2: The Occupants

The First Owners & Occupants*



Katherine Toberman Sonnenschein

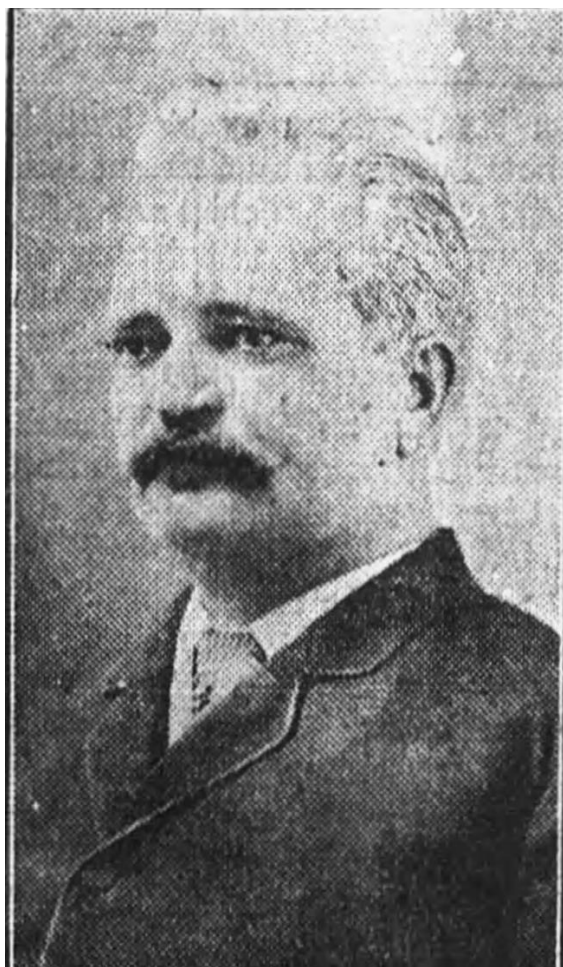
1844-1926

BIRTH: 1844 May 23 • Austria [also listed Czechoslovakia]

DEATH: 1926 FEB 02 • St. Louis City, St. Louis City, Missouri, USA

Arrival in US: 1866

Image Source: ancestry.com Steven Tyler originally shared this on 01 May 2018



Carl Sonnenschein.

Charles Sonnenschein Jr.

[Carl Friedrich Louis Sonneschein]

1837-1903

BIRTH: 1837 Oct 05 • Prussia, Germany

DEATH: 1903 Feb 02 • Saint Louis, Missouri, USA

Arrival in US: 1862 • New York, NY

Image Source: Westliche Post, Sun 1903-02-08, p7

*See "2356 Virginia_Ancestry" folder for sources, images, and more extensive information on the Sonnenschein Family. The document "Sonnenchein Family_ancestry" lists the primary family members and their timelines.

* Sonnenschein means "sunshine" in German.

The First Generation:

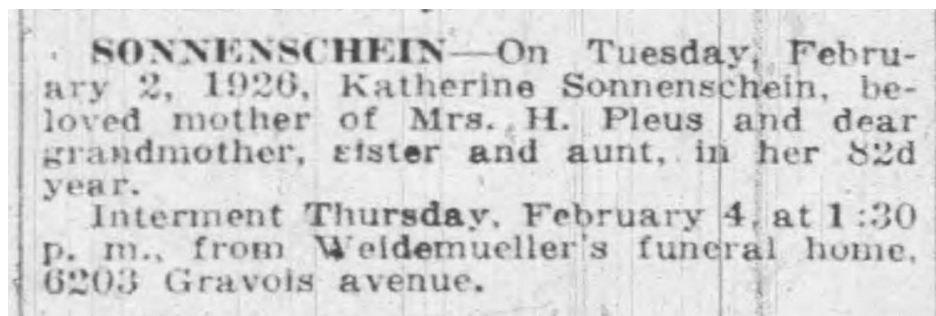
The first official residents and the longest to live in the home were the Sonnenschein-Pleus family. They lived in 2356 Virginia Ave for a collective of 42 years.⁹

Charles Sonnenschein Jr. [Carl Friedrich Louis Sonneschein] was born in or near Neuholdensleben, Sachsen (Saxony), Deutschland (Germany) on October 5th, 1837. He was born to Christiana Swanger [Friedrich Sophie Christiane Sonneschein] and Charles Sonnenschein [Karl Heinrich Eduard Sonneschein]. In 1862, Charles departed Bremen, Germany with his mother Christine, brother[?] William and sister Auguste, and arrived in New York on the ship Tuisko on 14th of October. Their destination was St. Louis. The first St. Louis wave of Germans came in the mid-1830s with those looking for land to escape crowding and were lured by a book describing the area like the Rhineland. The second wave of Germans was in the 1850s, with those fleeing political unrest after the revolutions.

By 1863, Charles was 26, unmarried, and living at 442 Morgan Street as noted on the Civil War draft registration records for those listed in Class I and subject to do military duty. He soon married Katherine Toberman Sonnenschein, who arrived in the United States around 1866. She is also known or listed as Kate and Catherine in City Directories.¹⁰ The Census records list her birthplace as Austria while her death certificate lists it as Czechoslovakia. On March 27, 1871, they had their only child Laura/Laure. The three resided at 315 South Fifth Street in 1880.

Charles was a tailor and ran a gentleman's clothing shop. His obituary notes that he was "in business in St. Louis since 1862", as soon as he arrived in the city.¹¹ He was noted as a "cutter" in the city directories as well as on his death certificate. Katherine is not listed with a job, but the 1910 census notes her as having her "own income".

Two years after 2356 Virginia's construction, Katherine is listed on the deed for the home. She purchased it from realtor F. E. Niesen for \$3,750 on the May 4th, 1896. There was only the three of them in the house until later that year when Laura's husband Henry was added into the mix after their October wedding. Charles and Katherine lived there until their respective deaths. Charles died from a heart condition Feb 2, 1903, at the age of 66. The funeral took place at the home and then he was buried at Bethany Cemetery in Wellston, St. Louis County. Katherine died on February 2, 1926, at 82 years old due to a right cerebral hemorrhage. She is buried at Memorial Park Cemetery in Jennings, St. Louis County.

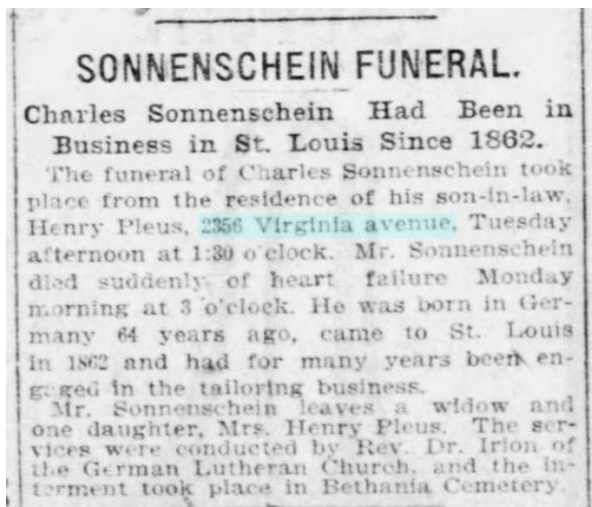


St. Louis Globe Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), Wed. Feb. 3, 1926, p21, Obituaries.

⁹ 42 years, 4 months, 7 days or a total of 15,469 days. Sonnenschein at 29 years and Pleus at 12 years

¹⁰ She was not listed in the directories until after her husband's death.

¹¹ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 04 Feb 1903, Wed, Page 4, "Sonnenschein Funeral". Newspapers.com



St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), Wed. 04 Feb 1903, Page 4, "Sonnenschein Funeral".

Charles Sonnenschein had been in business in St. Louis since 1862. The funeral of Charles Sonnenschein took place from the residence of his son-in-law Henry Pleus, 2356 Virginia Avenue, Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. Mr. Sonnenschein died suddenly of heart failure Monday morning at 3 o'clock. He was born in Germany 64 years ago, came to St. Louis in 1862 and had for many years been engaged in the tailoring business.

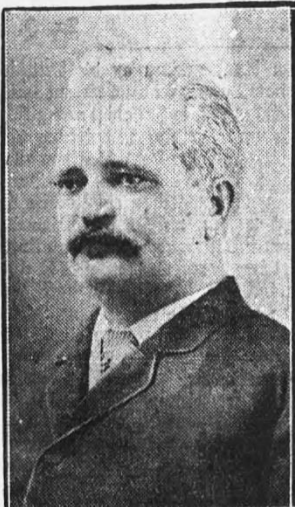
Mr. Sonnenschein leaves a widow and one daughter, Mrs. Henry Pleus. The services were conducted by Rev. Dr. Irion of the German Lutheran Church and the interment took place in Bethania Cemetery.

Zur letzten Ruhe.

Herr "Carl Sonnenschein" starb Sonntag Nacht plötzlich an einem Herzleiden im Alter von 64 Jahren. Derselbe wanderte mit seinen Eltern im Jahre 1862 nach Amerika aus und ließ sich in St. Louis nieder, wo er seit der Zeit wohnte und ein Herren-Kleider-Geschäft betrieb.

Er wurde letzten Dienstag unter zahlreichem Geleite von seiner Wohnung aus, 2356 Virginia Ave., auf dem Bethania-Kirchhof beigesetzt. Pastor Irion hielt die Leichenrede.

Er hinterläßt die Gattin, eine Tochter, Frau Henry Pleus, und zwei Schwestern, Frau Augusta Vollrath, Gattin des allbekannten Musik-Direktors Chas. Vollrath, und Frau Louise Sonnenschein. Friede seiner Asche.



Carl Sonnenschein.

[Westliche Post \(St. Louis, Missouri\), 08 Feb 1903, Sun](#), Page 7 [Newspapers.com](#)

"To Rest: Carl Sonnenschein"

Mr. Carl Sonnenschein went [passed] on Sunday night from a heart condition at the age of 64. The same emigrated to America with his parents in 1862 and settled in St. Louis where he lived since that time and ran a gentleman's clothing shop.

He was put under [interred] last Tuesday by numerous escorts from his apartment, 2356 Virginia Ave., to the Bethania churchyard. Pastor Irion held the funeral speech. He leaves behind his wife, a daughter, Mrs. Henry Pleus, and two sisters, Mrs. Augusts Vollrath, wife of the well-known music director Chas. Vollrath, and Mrs. Louise Sonnenschein. Peace to his ashes.

Laura Louise Sonnenschein Pleus



Laura Sonnenschein, undated **Source:** ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 01 May 2018.



Laura Pleus, undated **Source:** ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 01 May 2018.



Henry and Laura Pleus 1893, **Source:** ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 23 Feb 2018.



Laura Sonnenschein Pleus, undated, **Source:** ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 01 May 2018.

The Second Generation:

Laura Sonnenschein and Henry Pleus were the second generation in the household. Not long after the home was purchased, they were married and took over the home. The wedding is noted only in the local German newspapers in three separate articles.¹²

Mr. Henry Pleus (27) and Miss Laura Sonnenschein (25) were married at 8 o'clock on Thursday, October 2, 1896, at St. Francis de Sales Church by Pastor Log. The best man was Henry C. Neun, and the bridesmaid was Miss Olga Vollrath, a cousin of the bride. Among the guests were: Miss Louisa Sonnenschein, Mrs. Miehe, Mr. Chas. Vollrath with family, Mr. Eckhardt with family, Mr. Stuhr with family, Dr. Lubede with family, Mr. Alb. Ohnsorg with family, Mr. Schramm with family, and Mr. John Zerr with family; furthermore Miss Geds, Stidles, Thonsen, Sid and Ahlendorf and the Messrs. Louis Zepp, Nidel, Hende, Wittmeyer and Oswald.

The wedding was followed by a reception at 2356 Virginia Ave., the bride's parents house, The house was decorated with white chrysanthemums and potted plants. At the reception, "only the [closest relatives] had been fed" and the young couple was given wonderful presents from all sides. The newlyweds went on their honeymoon to the east. Afterwards, the articles note, that they "will be staying at the young woman's parents' house when they return" and will receive guests there after November 1st.



Henry Pleus, undated, Source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 01 May 2018.

Henry Pleus was born on August 25, 1869, in Illinois, to Joseph Bernard Pleus, who was 41 at the time and Susanna Adelheid Ahling, who was 35. The wedding articles note that Henry had a large group of friends and acquaintances. While all three articles list that Henry worked for Green Tree Brewery for several years, one stated that "after his retirement [they will] start their household in apartment 2356 Virginia Ave." Henry was an agent for the bottled beer department of the Green Tree Brewery. Green Tree Brewery (810 Sidney, corner of 9th and Sydney) was founded in 1855 and closed in 1919. While the wedding was in 1896, he is listed at the company until at least 1921 according to the City Directories.¹³ His position title changed over the years from salesman, collector, and solicitor but was in the brewery business for 45 years.

Henry's family tree on ancestry notes that he loved to fish with real estate men at the Gilbert Lake Club (1916) and was part of the Office Men's Club of St. Louis Brewing Association (1908).¹⁴ By 1922, the directory lists Henry as the proprietor of Reno Auto Wash Company, located at 22 S 11th, the NE corner Walnut. (It is currently a 1981 office building). The cars were purportedly washed with the "new Compressed Air Method." After this foray he retired completely. Henry died at 68 years old on April 26, 1938, due to coronary thrombosis. He is buried at Memorial Park Cemetery in Jennings, St. Louis County.

¹² Westliche Post (St. Louis, Missouri), 21 Oct 1896, Wed, Page 8, "Pleus – Sonnenschein". [Newspapers.com](#); Anzeiger des Westens (St. Louis, Missouri), 23 Oct 1896, Fri, Page 8, "Pleus – Sonnenschein". [Newspapers.com](#); Westliche Post (St. Louis, Missouri), 25 Oct 1896, Sun, Page 3, "From Society". [Newspapers.com](#)

¹³ Henry Pleus' death certificate notes that he was a salesman at a brewery and the date last worked at this occupation was 1920.

¹⁴ [Henry Pleus - Facts \(ancestry.com\)](#)

There is not as much information on Laura Pleus. She is noted as having a “diverse education” in one of the wedding articles and had parents known to be the “most beneficial/ most advantageous in in all of South St. Louis.” Laura was a housewife and had three children: Oliver H, Irma L, and Ella M. Her children lived at the home into adulthood. Oliver died in war in 1918 and both Ella and Irma are listed there in the 1922 City Directory.

Katherine Sonnenschein, the matriarch of the family, died on February 2, 1926, and did not have a will. The house passed to her daughter Laura [2/24/1926].¹⁵ By May 13, 1926, the family listed the home for sale, selling under multiple realtors (Vernon Laux, Christian Brinkop R. E. Co., Dimmitt-Rickhoff-Bayer). [see newspaper clipping]. The home was listed in 1926 for \$8,000 which dropped to \$7,500 by 1928. Henry and Laura gave up the sale and remained in the home until Henry’s death on April 26, 1938.

Soon after Henry’s death, Laura had the home sold by October of 1938. [see newspaper clipping]. Joseph C. Rengel Co. sold the home to Eleanor Foote & Estalla Cummings. Laura officially sold the home on September 21, 1938, to Eleanor B. Foote. Laura moved in with Lillian Placke in an apartment at 5211 1W Sutherland Avenue. Lillian was the mother-in-law to Ella M. Placke (nee Pleus). The 1940 census lists Lillian at the head of the rental and Laura as “friend”. Both Laura and Lillie were born in 1870/71, were widowed, and completed elementary school.

Laura died at the apartment on January 24, 1941, at 69 years old due to a left cerebral hemorrhage. She was a member of War Mothers of America and Gold Star Mothers. According to her death certificate, her daughter Ella reported the death. Along with her mother and husband, Laura is buried at Memorial Park Cemetery in Jennings, St. Louis County.

PLEUS, LAURA (nee Sonnenschein)—3211 Sutherland avenue, Friday, January 24, 1941, beloved wife of the late Henry Pleus, dear mother of Mrs. Ella M. Placke, Mrs. Irma Hoffman and the late Oliver Pleus and our dear grandmother, cousin, aunt and mother-in-law. Funeral from KRIEGSHAUSER MORTUARY, 4228 South Kingshighway boulevard, Monday, January 27, at 1 p. m. Interment Memorial Park Cemetery. A member of War Mothers of America and Gold Star Mothers.

The St Louis Star and Times, Sat Jan 25, 1941, p12, “Laura Pleus Obit”

BRICK RESIDENCE—\$8000.
2356 Virginia; 6 rooms, bath, furnace, hot-water heater, slate roof; 2 garages; in excellent condition. “SEE US.”
CHRISTIAN BRINKOP R. E. CO.,
LAclede 3040-41. 3621 S. Grand.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 11 Jul 1926, Sun, Page 60, “Improved Property for Sale: Residences: South”, Newspapers.com

Flats and Homes Sold by Joseph C. Rengel Co.
Transactions on the following properties were reported last week by the Joseph C. Rengel Realty Company: A flat at 3649 Humphrey lja avenue, to Charles Baker; a house at 2356 Virginia avenue, for Laura Pleus to Eleanor Foote, and Estalla Cummings.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 09 Oct 1938, Sun, Page 37, “Flats and Homes Sold by Joseph C Rengel Co.”, Newspapers.com



Lillian Placke, undated, Source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 01 May 2018.

¹⁵ Deed Book PC 66, p4, 63192 1926, St. Louis City Hall.



"IMG_1881," Source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 28 Oct 2020

Depicts the Pleus Family (from left to right): front - Laura Sonnenchein (1871–1941), Ella Marie (1903–1996), Henry Pleus (1869–1938); back - Oliver Henry (1898–1918), Irma Laura (1901–1985). [the girls' identification might be transposed]

Laura Pleus

1871–1941

BIRTH: 24 FEB 1871 • Saint Louis, Missouri, USA
 birth certificate notes Birth Date as 27 MARCH 1871
 death certificate notes Birth Date as 28 FEB 1871,
 DEATH: 24 JANUARY 1941 • Saint Louis, St. Louis City, MO

Henry Pleus

1869–1938

BIRTH: 25 AUGUST 1869 • Illinois
 DEATH: 26 APRIL 1938 • St. Louis, St. Louis County, MO

Pleus Children:



Oliver Henry Pleus

1898–1918

BIRTH: 1898 • St. Louis, MO
 DEATH: OCTOBER 10, 1918 • Argonne
 Battle in France



Irma Laura Pleus Bentrup/Hoffman

1901–1985

BIRTH: 14 JUNE 1901 • St. Louis, MO
 DEATH: ABOUT 1985 • Portland,
 Oregon



Ella Marie Pleus Placke

1903–1996

BIRTH: 07 JAN 1903 • 2352 Virginia, St
 Louis, MO
 DEATH: 10 NOV 1996 • Saint Louis, MO



Oliver Pleus, "IMG_0814", undated, source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 12 Mar 2019



Oliver Pleus, World War 1, Gold Star, Court of Honor, Cenotaph Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery Source [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) and [Find A Grave Memorial](https://www.findagrave.com), Photo added by Dwaine Desselle.

He received a Purple Heart Medal, WWI Victory Medal. During his service, Oliver's mother Laura was very supportive and actively worked in the Women's Auxiliary of the 138th. She also took part with the Gold Star mothers at Soldier's Memorial. [St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 08 Nov 1918, Fri, Page 8, "Private Oliver Pleus 138th, Reported Dead", [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)]

Oliver Pleus, the first born Pleus child, was born in St. Louis on January 28, 1896. He grew up at the house on Virginia Ave. He worked as a salesman at printing company Woodward & Tierman from age 16 to 18 years old.¹⁶ He then shifted to military engagements.

In March 1916, at the age of 18, he enlisted in the old First Missouri Regiment and went with his regiment to work on the Mexican border.¹⁷ There was major conflict in Europe at this time and the United States officially entered World War I in April 1917. Oliver had returned to St. Louis and enlisted on March 26, 1917, to the National Guard. According to his enlistment, he had blue eyes, blonde hair, fair skin, 5 ft 7in tall, and 120 pounds which was noted as being underweight.¹⁸ He served on guard duty in St. Louis until his regiment was assembled into service for war.

¹⁶ *Missouri, U.S. Pre-World War II Adjutant General Enlistment Contracts, 1900-1941* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2020. [700-710] [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

According to the City directories, he was a clerk at 303 N 3rd (1915), then a salesman (1917) and then a clerk for USA (1918).

¹⁷ *Jefferson City Post-Tribune* (Jefferson City, Missouri), 11 Nov 1918, Mon, Page 1 "Killed in Argonne Battle". [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)

¹⁸ *Missouri, U.S. Pre-World War II Adjutant General Enlistment Contracts, 1900-1941* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2020. [700-710]

Corporal Pleus was shipped off with his unit, Company "L" 138th Infantry, from New York on the ship Missanabie May 3, 1918.¹⁹ The war had been going on since 1914 and this was towards the end. Oliver fought and was wounded on September 26th while fighting in Argonne. The Battle of Argonne Forest/Meus-Argonne Offensive took place from Sep. 26, 1918 – Nov. 11, 1918. The National Archives lists the battle as...

"part of the final allied offensive and the largest operations of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in World War I, with over a million American soldiers participating. It was also the deadliest campaign in American history, resulting in over 26,000 soldiers being killed in action (KIA) and over 120,000 total casualties."²⁰

He was hospitalized but succumbed to his wounds [due to hospital transfers] on Oct. 10th, 1918.

died of wounds October 10. On Oct. 12th, unaware of his death, Corp. Louis H. Smith wrote to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Everett H. Smith of Webster Groves about the fight and Corp. Pleus' ordeal. He wrote:²¹

"I jumped in a big shell hole with Oliver Pleus. His mother attends the auxiliary. I presume you know her. He was shot in the leg, but not serious. There were three other men in the shell hole with us. One was shot through the head and died in a few minutes. I was lying beside him for three hours and I could not move, as the Germans would have seen me. I had a little shovel with me and dug deeper in the ground. The Germans were firing at us all the time, but we were well down in our hole and the bullets went over our heads.

I was praying all the time and it sure did good. I thought there was no chance for us any more, as we were being surrounded with machine guns. Finally, an American airplane came flying over. I pulled out a white flag and signaled to him. He saw us in the shell hole and flew back and notified the tanks. We were so happy when we saw the tanks come over."

Two days after his death, he was buried in Merignac (Gironde), what is now the largest suburb of Bordeaux.²² Newspapers noted that his parents received the official death announcement Thursday, November 7th, 1918, as he was not listed in casualty lists yet.²³ His death was then listed in all the local newspapers. Oliver's uncle, Reverend J. B. Pleus of Jefferson City held a high mass on Nov. 12th, 1918, at the Immaculate Conception church.²⁴

On Sept. 4, 1920, his body was disinterred and then shipped from Bordeaux, France to Hoboken, New Jersey arriving on Oct. 18, 1920.²⁵ His body was transported on the U.S.A.T. Pocahontas. It arrived in St. Louis in Nov. of that year at Hauch & Smith, Undertakers [3403 S. Grand] where it lay in state. The family held his funeral on Saturday, Nov. 20th, 1920, at St. Margaret's Catholic Church. His body was escorted to the church by "members of L Company, 138th Infantry; members of Joseph M. Fournier Post, No. 3 American Legion, and ex-service men employed at the Woodward & Tiernan plant."²⁶ While Oliver is buried at his family plot at Memorial Park Cemetery in Jennings, he also has a marker at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in Lemay.

¹⁹ The National Archives at College Park; College Park, Maryland; Record Group Title: *Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, 1774-1985*; Record Group Number: 92; Roll or Box Number: 503. May 3, 1918. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

²⁰ The Meuse-Argonne Offensive, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, October 16, 2018. [National Archives](https://www.nationalarchives.gov)

²¹ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 08 Nov 1918, Fri, Page 8, "Private Oliver Pleus 138th, Reported Dead", [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)

²² "Oliver H. Pleus," U.S. WWI Burial Cards – G.R.S. Form 13, [Fold3 \(slpl.org\)](https://www.fold3.com) Grave #834

²³ The St. Louis Star and Times, St. Louis, Missouri, 08 Nov 1918, Fri, Page 3, "City Has Three on U.S. Record of Casualties Today". [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)

²⁴ Jefferson City Post-Tribune (Jefferson City, Missouri), 11 Nov 1918, Mon, Page 1, "Killed in Argonne Battle". [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)

²⁵ "List of Military Personnel Returning to the United States: Remains of Overseas Dead." US Army WWI Transport Service, Passenger Lists, [92] [Fold3 \(slpl.org\)](https://www.fold3.com)

²⁶ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 19 Nov 1920, Fri, Page 28, "Funeral Tomorrow for Soldier Killed in Argonne". [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)

Born on June 14, 1901, in Missouri **Irma Laura Pleus** was the second child in the family.²⁷ The Pleus daughters, Irma and Ella, were very social, hosting several notable parties. In 1914, at the ages of 13 and 11, they gave a show at their home for the benefit of the Pure Milk Fund, raising \$2 to “save babies”.²⁸ The night’s entertainment included recitations, songs, jokes, and a marionette show. After her youthful party days, Irma had some bumps throughout her life.

By the age of 17, she was a stenographer for the St. Louis Times living at home with her sister, parents and grandmother.²⁹ Around this time, she met and married Fred Bentrup, a bank employee. The newspaper from April 9th, 1920, lists the marriage license between Erma L. Pleus of 12356 Virginia Ave and Fredric G. Bentrup of 2923 Ellendale.³⁰ Fred said they were married January 13, 1923, and lived at 3457 Sidney Street [4 blocks from her parent’s house].³¹ In the same news article, Irma noted that it was their second marriage in 1923.



Irma (left) and Ella (right) Pleus, 1921. source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 22 Feb 2018

In November of 1921, Irma was 20 years old and attending evening courses with her sister at Washington University.³² The newspaper articles note her as a divorcee though it’s unclear whether she married Fred Bentrup in 1920 or 1923. She was having an affair with Leroy P. Buzette, a 22-year-old teller for the Liberty Central Trust Co where Irma was a stenographer. Mrs. Myrtle Buzette, 21-year-old of 4218 West Pine Blvd. found out about the relationship in June and warned Irma to stay away. According to the bank, Irma was a temporary employee and the Bank said she was temporarily employed and left 3 weeks ago. This is around the same time that Myrtle said Leroy resigned from his job.³³

Myrtle had been stalking the area near Irma’s home. She and another couple rode to the corner of Sidney and Virginia. When she saw Irma leave Leroy’s car parked in front of in front of 2600 Virginia avenue, Myrtle left the nearby corner store to confront Pleus. At 11:30 pm on Friday, Nov. 4th, Myrtle threw carbolic acid on Irma burning her face, left eye, and breast. Her physician later reported that she may lose her vision. [another article noted it was her right eye].

Both Buzettes were held at the Magnolia Avenue Police Station. Pleus didn’t press any charges. Myrtle threatened Irma there, saying “You don’t dare prosecute me; you know what I know about you.” She had told Irma what she would do if she continued seeing her husband and that “I would do the same thing again.” That

²⁷ She is listed as “Erma” in many records.

²⁸ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 30 Jul 1914, Thu, Page 7, “Three Benefits Thursday Night to Save Babies”. [Newspapers.com](#)

²⁹ 1918 City Directory and 1920 US Federal Census

³⁰ The St. Louis Star and Times (St. Louis, Missouri), 09 Apr 1920, Fri, Page 30, “Marriage Licenses – Erma Pleus”. [Newspapers.com](#)

³¹ St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 19 Jan 1930, Sun, Page 1, “\$100,000 Alienation Suit Filed Against Auto Man by Broker”. [Newspapers.com](#)

³² Washington University (St. Louis, MO) A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Washington University for the Academic Year 1921. [Google Books](#). P485. They are listed as Ella and Erma Laura Pleus and are also listed in 1922.

³³ Attack references from: St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 05 Nov 1921, Sat, Page 1, & 2 “Wife Throws Acid on Her husband’s Woman Companion”. [Newspapers.com](#); The St. Louis Star and Times (St. Louis, Missouri), 05 Nov 1921, Sat, Page 1, “Woman Hurls Acid in Face of Her Rival” [Newspapers.com](#); The St. Louis Star and Times (St. Louis, Missouri), 06 Nov 1921, Sun, Page 1 & 3, “Love Returns Home After Acid Throwing”, [Newspapers.com](#)

night Myrtle was unsure where her relationship stood stating that “I suppose that it is all over between my husband and me now.” The Buzettes had been married three years and left the station together. [33 #2] The Star and Times Nov. 6th article noted they had “forgiven and forgotten” and took each other back [33 #3].



The St. Louis Star and Times (St. Louis, Missouri), 06 Nov 1921, Sun, Page 1, “Love Returns Home After Acid Throwing”.
Newspapers.com

Irma continued with her life after the affair. She picked up a stenographer job at the Continental Life Insurance Company.³⁴ Even after the social fiasco, she and her sister hosted a Halloween party at their parents’ house on Saturday, Nov 4th, 1922.³⁵ By 1926 she had her daughter Joy Elaine Bentrup. [Joy’s social security application lists her date of birth as 23 Dec 1925 but also lists her parents as Fred G Bentrup and Florence Griffith].³⁶ During this time, 1926-1928, Laura Pleus was trying to sell the house at 2356 Virginia.

Three years later, Irma experienced more turmoil. She and Fred Bentrup were divorced on December 9th, 1929. Irma obtained the divorce on the “grounds of general indignities” and received “custody of their 4-year-old

³⁴ 1922 City Directory

³⁵ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 05 Nov 1922, Sun, Page 21, “Social Events”, Newspapers.com

³⁶ Ancestry.com. *U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. SS Notes: Nov 1942: Name listed as JOY ELAINE BENTRUP; Sep 1947: Name listed as JOY ELAINE SMITH; 28 Dec 1987: Name listed as JOY SMITH. (Smith may come from Irma’s second marriage)

daughter, Joy Elaine, a \$1500 cash settlement, and \$50 a month child support".³⁷ At this time she was living with her mother at 2356 Virginia with her daughter and did not have a job.³⁸

The following year, in early January 1930, Fred, an insurance broker with offices in Boatmen's Bank Building filed a \$100,00 suit against Peter Frank Smith, Jr. vice president of Reller Chevrolet Company, 7239 Manchester Avenue. The suit claimed that Peter alienated the affections of "Erma" L. Bentrup, corrupting her against Fred. Fred stated that Irma's relationship with Peter began in 1927 and she left the home Dec 1st, 1929, but he was unaware of the relationship until after the divorce.³⁹ Bentrup met Smith when he sold him insurance after his wife's death and were mere acquaintances. [*] Both Irma and Peter denied all of Fred's claims. She divorced him, Irma said, because "she ceased to care for him a year before when she learned he was interested in another woman."⁴⁰ That woman, nurse Electra Louise Seybold, testified for Smith that she attended parties with Fred and that he kissed her. The case never came to trial.

In a twist, Peter ended up marrying Irma/Erma in August 1931, one year after her divorce from Fred and after his accusations of alienation. The relationship did not last long. They separated in August 1932, and he was granted a divorce by October 1933.⁴¹

***A little back story on Peter....** Peter F. Smith Jr. was married to Virginia Reller, the daughter of A. H. Reller of 24 Gast Place. They married on September 6, 1922, in a family only reception at the bride's parents home.⁴² Smith was a University of Chicago graduate whose parents were from Havana, Cuba and Virginia was a graduate of Mary Institute and served twice as a Veiled Prophet's Ball maid of honor.⁴³ After the wedding they resided in Chicago, Peter's hometown, and in 1923 had a child. Then 1926 they moved to St. Louis. Then on Sunday, December 25, 1927, Christmas Day, 26-year-old Virginia shot herself in the head.⁴⁴ She left behind her two children, Flora Reller Smith, 10 months old and Virginia F. Smith, 4 ½ years. Neither her husband or father testified, stating she suffered a nervous breakdown the year prior and had "melancholia". It was deemed indeterminable whether the shooting was accidental or intentional.

Irma's daughter Joy eventually moved out to Kansas City with her father and his new wife Florence Griffith. It's unclear what happened to Irma after her newsworthy affairs. Her ancestry.com family tree lists that she married Fred C Hoffman of St. Louis in 1938. There is a 1940 census record listing them in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. Irma was a housewife and Fred, 25 years her senior, was a bar tender. Her ancestry notes that she supposedly died in Portland in 1985 and she was a heavy drinker and died in poverty but there is no other supporting evidence.⁴⁵

³⁷ St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 19 Jan 1930, Sun, Page 1, "\$100,000 Alienation Suit Filed Against Auto Man by Broker". Newspapers.com

³⁸ 1930 US Federal Census

³⁹ St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Missouri), 19 Jan 1930, Sun, Page 1, "\$100,000 Alienation Suit Filed Against Auto Man by Broker". Newspapers.com

⁴⁰ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 08 Feb 1930, Sat, Page 3, "Surprise Deposition in Alienation Suit". Newspapers.com

⁴¹ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 29 Oct 1933, Sun, Page 46, "Peter F. Smith Jr., Auto Dealer, Obtains Divorce". Newspapers.com

⁴² St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 05 Sep 1922, Tue, Page 15, "Miss Virginia Reller to Wed Chicago Man". Newspapers.com

⁴³ The St. Louis Star and Times (St. Louis, Missouri), 04 Dec 1921, Sun, Page 12, "News of St. Louis Society." Newspapers.com

⁴⁴ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 27 Dec 1927, Tue, Page 3, "Coroner Returns Open Verdict in Death of Woman". Newspapers.com

⁴⁵ This was posted by family tree create Steven Tyler, who may have relations to the Placke line.



"Ella Pleus, 1921", source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 28 Oct 2020



Ella Pleus, undated, source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 28 Oct 2020

Ella Marie Pleus, the third Pleus child, was born on January 7, 1903, in St. Louis.⁴⁶ She completed her senior year of high school and at 17 she was listed in the 1920 Census as a stenographer. Around that time, she was working at Johnston Tin Foil and Metal Co.⁴⁷ She then hopped over to the Textile Products M Co. by 1921.⁴⁸ The following year, the 1922 City Directory lists her as a stenographer at Mo State Life Insurance Co.

As noted with Irma, the Pleus girls threw notable parties that made the newspaper. On Saturday, Nov 4th, 1922, they hosted a surprise Halloween party [even after Irma's social debacle].⁴⁹ The house was decorated in Halloween colors, and it was a mixed sex party. Emma was 19 and Irma 21 years old.

She lived at 2356 Virginia until 1928 when she married Clarence Walter Placke on June 15th at the age of 25. C. Walter had a degree in agriculture from the University of Missouri and according to the 1933 City Directory, worked at Mondarch Metal Weather Strip Corp. They moved around to different rentals in St. Louis, but she and her husband purportedly moved back in with her parents in the early 1930s.⁵⁰ They are listed in the 1933 City Directory at 2356 Virginia.

By the 1930s she was a housewife and stay at home mother. The 1930 and 1940 Census records note that she had two children: Jeanne M., born in 1930 and Marion L., born in 1937. Jeanne married Don Schleiffarth and

⁴⁶Missouri State Archives; Jefferson City, MO, USA; *Missouri Birth Records [Microfilm]*. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

⁴⁷ 1919 St. Louis City Directory

⁴⁸ 1921 St. Louis City Directory

⁴⁹ St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri), 05 Nov 1922, Sun, Page 21, "Social Events", [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)

⁵⁰ Ancestry lists the couple at several residences with no sources to confirm some. 3151 Holiday Ave. [1928], 5308 Columbia [1929], 417 Lee Avenue [1930 ~ Census], 2356 Virginia Ave [1932/33 ~ City Directory], 5227 Murdock [1935-40 ~ Census], 424 E. Jackson, Webster Groves [1941], 240 Turf Court [1960].

lived in Kirkwood, Missouri. At the time of her father's death (1981), Marion was living in Austin, Texas with the las name of Dedrick, but by 1996 she was married Melvin Natho. Walter passed on Jan 12, 1981, and Ella Marie passed on Nov. 10, 1996, in Webster Groves. Both are buried at Memorial Park.



Walter and Ella Placke, [At Christmas time], undated, source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 23 Feb 2018



Jeanne and Marion Placke, undated, [children of Ella Placke]. source: ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this on 28 Oct 2020

Sonnenschein/Pleus RENTERS:

During the Sonnenschein/Pleus ownership, they had renters, or additional people residing at the home. Their presence is a little more difficult to find. City Directories prior to 1930 are only listed by alphabetical name. After 1930, they also list by street address, though not all residents are listed at each dwelling. Most of the available listed renters at 2356 Virginia Ave are in the early 1900s, but this does not mean there were not additional renters into the 1930s.

The **1903 City Directory**, George C Ritter, a clerk, is listed at the residence.

The **1906 City Directory** lists five renters:

Last Name	First Name	Occupation
Eckert	A R	engraver
Larkin	Anna	forelady
Little	Edward L	Salesman at Georgia-Stimson F & C Co.
Massmann	Emily	milly
Massmann	Emma	clk

The **1930 Census** lists boarder J. W. Gentz.

Eleanor Foote: Homeowner 1938-1950

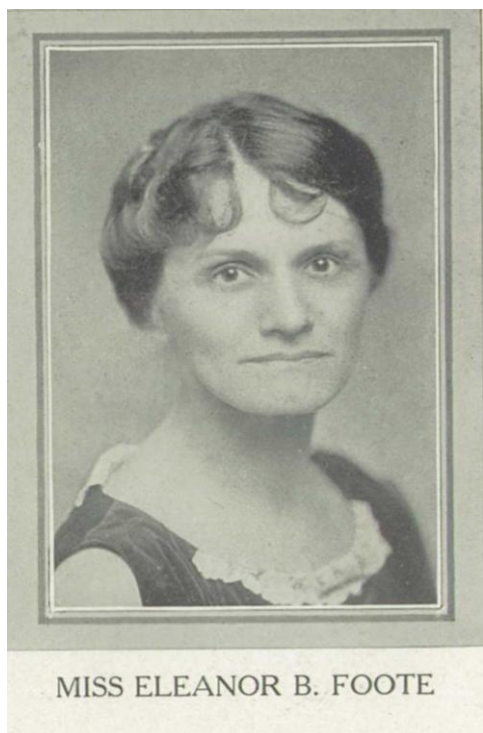
October 9th articles in the 1938 newspapers list Joseph C. Rengel Co. selling 2356 Virginia to Eleanor B. Foote. According to the title, the home was officially sold on September 21, 1938. Eleanor was 55 years old at the time, and was a single, city public school teacher living with her father.

Eleanor Bailey Foote was born on 21 Sep 1883 to Arthur Hoyt Foote and Gertrude Emily McGill Foote in St Louis, Missouri.⁵¹ Her mother passed away in 1935. She had three siblings:⁵²

Lucy Dodds Foote, 1885–1920, a science teacher @ Central McKinley & Ben Blewett High schools, in the Serbian Relief Committee of America, died in Čačak, Serbia⁵³

- **Arthur McGill Foote**, 1889–1891
- **Horace Stanwood Foote**, 1891–1977, he lived at 2356 Virginia according to 12-14-1943 newspaper clippings under marriage license. He married Calvina Wilson of 4570 Laclede.

Eleanor, her brother, and her father resided at the home. Her brother Horace was active duty in the Navy by 1941. Arthur was a public notary. The 1940 census lists him as unable to work, however the 1940 and 1946 City Directories lists him as the owner of his business as a public notary. Eleanor went to St. Louis High School and graduated from Pratt Institute [NY] in Domestic Science. She was part of the first faculty at Grover Cleveland High School, at 4348 Louisiana Ave, St. Louis. teaching Home Economics. The 1940 census lists her income as \$4,000.



⁵¹ Missouri State Archives; Jefferson City, MO, USA; *Missouri Birth Records [Microfilm]*. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

⁵² Abram W. Foote. "Foote Family: Comprising the Genealogy and History of Nathaniel Foote of Wethersfield, Connecticut and his Descendants". Vol. 1. Marble City Press – The Tuttle Company – Rutland, Vermont, 1907. P510. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

⁵³ The St. Louis Star and Times (St. Louis, Missouri), 24 Aug 1920, Tue, Page 1, "Miss Lucy Foote, Relief Worker is Dead in Serbia." [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)

"Sponsors Class of January 1923" source:
ancestry.com, P7 *Cleveland High*
School; Year: 1923

Faculty [1929], p26, 75th Anniversary Cleveland High School [CHS]
yearbook. Source ancestry.com. "*U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-*
2012"; School Name: *Cleveland High School*; Year: 1991⁵⁴

Eleanor had lived at 2356 Virginia for 11 years. After her father died June 22, 1946⁵⁵, she remained in the house for an additional four years until she sold it to Mary J. Davison (single) on May 20, 1950. During this time, she may have had boarders. There was a marriage license for Edith F. Nelson of 2356 Virginia to William C. Richardson Jr of 4704 A Virginia in 1948.⁵⁶ The possible reason Eleanor sold the home was because at 67 years old she got married.

The St. Louis Globe Democrat has a **7-26-1950** marriage license for Eleanor B Foote and Clifford T. Darby of Sommerville, New Jersey. [Side Note: While the St. Louis Post Dispatch has a **7-26-1950** marriage license for Eleanor B. Foote and Floyd B. McCorkle of St. Louis County. It's unclear whether the latter listing was a mistake or another Eleanor]. Clifford was a poultry breeder born in St. Louis and relocated to Somerville, New Jersey where he owned Darby Leghorn Farms.⁵⁷ After their marriage, they traveled often, going to Nassau, Bahamas in 1955 and Bermuda in 1956. Clifford passed August 25, 1965, and Eleanor passed on February 2, 1981. Both are buried North Branch Reformed Church Cemetery, Branchburg Park, Somerset County, New Jersey.

ADDITIONAL OWNERS

Census records past 1950 are not available for public record. Online City Directories end around 1930 and those available at the library extend into the 1960s. This therefore makes finding more recent information difficult. For the bits of information culled on additional owners, please see the "Ancestry" folder word doc Inez Cartwright and the "Newspaper Articles" folder for clippings under:

10. Davidson_1950-1955, 1955-1962
11. Coke_1962-1976
13. Dickey_1976-1984
14. Cartwright_1984-2003

⁵⁴ There are additional photos from the 75th Anniversary Cleveland high School [CHS] yearbook in Foote's Ancestry folder.

⁵⁵ St. Louis Globe Democrat, Wed 1946-06-26, p4 "Burial Permit – Arthur H Foote"

⁵⁶ St. Louis Post Dispatch, Sat 1948-05-29, p7 "Marriage Licenses"

⁵⁷ The Courier News, Thu 1965-08-26, p33 "Clifford Darby, Poultry Breeder"

Section 3: The Home



2356 Virginia Ave., undated
ancestry.com, Steven Tyler originally shared this
on 28 Oct 2020



2356 VIRGINIA, taken 3/3/09,
GeoStLouis, entered: 03/06/2009

2012 Building Description

The home is in the Tower Grove East Historic District which is bounded by S. Grand, Louisiana, Nebraska, and Gravois. This two-and-a-half story red brick single-family residence was built in 1894. It has a limestone foundation and brick exterior with decorative pressed or molded brick sill course [also known as string- and belt-courses], in a circular design, emphasizing the horizontal line of the windowsills. This is typical of the ornament expressed throughout the district. There is a non-historic front porch on the left side of the front façade. It has a concrete foundation, ornamental metal supports and railings, and hipped roof. It shelters a door with a transom and a small window with a limestone sill. To the right of the porch are paired one-over-one, double-hung windows, with a limestone sill. The current porch was added in 1974 by homeowner Clause Coke (see building permit below). It replaced a full width porch. The side-left bay on the second floor is a one-over-one, double-hung window with vinyl infill set in an original door opening, which once accessed the second floor of the porch. The side-right bay is paired one-over-one, double-hung windows, with a limestone sill and a brick surround. At the roofline is a brick frieze. It has an asphalt shingle hipped roof with a small hipped, single-light dormer side-left and an asphalt shingle clad pediment end side-right on the front facade. At the rear there was one non-contributing garage that was added by homeowner Artie V. Davidson in 1959.

Tower Grove East Historic District Listing: 2356 Virginia (Contributing)⁵⁸

According to Census Records, the Sonnenchein/Pleus are listed at 2356 Virginia in the available records for 1910, 1920, and 1930. This is followed by Eleanor B Foote in the 1940 census.

1910 Census – Henry Pleus, the head, was listed as owning the house with a mortgage

1920 Census – Henry Pleus, the head, was listed as renting the home

1930 Census – Henry Pleus, the head, was listed as owning the home, valued at \$7,500 and owning a radio

1940 Census – Eleanor Foste [Foote] – the head, was listed as owning the home, valued at \$4,000.

Available Historic Building Permits

Source: Records Retention Department, St. Louis City Hall

2356 Virginia Ave, City Block 1435, Lot 27

PERMIT NO.	LOCATION	DATE	BLOCK No.
	E. S. Virginia bet Shenandoah & Sidney	10-1-94	1435
USE (2) two story brick dwellings		COST	\$5,000.00
OWNER	B. F. Waggoner		
ARCHITECT			
FORM NO. 277-M			

Inactive Building Permit 1894, October 1st

⁵⁸ Tower Grove East Historic District Section number 7 Page 86: <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/13000114.pdf>

PERMIT No. DD 894	LOCATION 2356 Virginia	DATE 2-10-59	BLOCK No. 1435
USE Erect 1 sty.fr.garage		COST \$ 750	
OWNER Artie V. Davison			
ARCHITECT			
FORM NO. 277-M			

Active Building Permit 1959, February 10th

PERMIT No. G-9457	LOCATION 2356 Virginia	DATE 2/22/74	BLOCK No. 1435
USE construct front and rear porches (roofs to remain)		COST 1200.00	
OWNER Clause Coke			
Application Rec'd.	ROUTE #1	ROUTE #2	ROUTE #3
REMARKS:			BLDG. 153.ML

Active Building Permit 1974, February 22nd