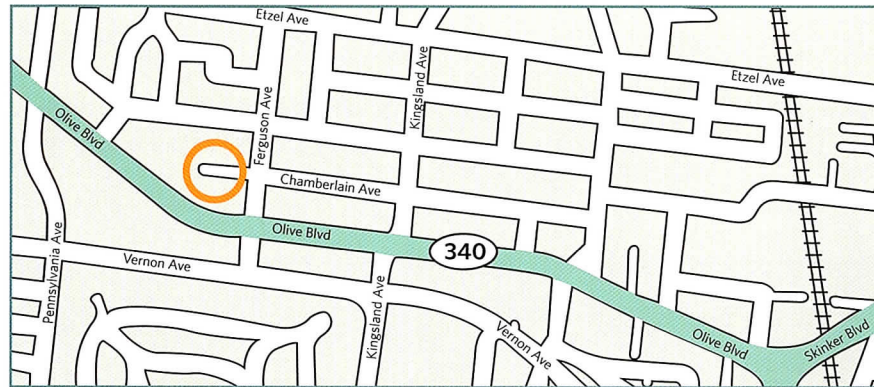


THE SUTTER-MEYER SOCIETY

enriching our present by sharing the stories of our past

The Sutter-Meyer Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to preserve the 19th-century Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse, the oldest building in University City, Missouri.



The Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse is located at 6826 Chamberlain Court in University City, Missouri.

SUTTER-MEYER SOCIETY
6826 CHAMBERLAIN COURT
UNIVERSITY CITY, MO 63130

THE SUTTER-MEYER FARMHOUSE

6826 CHAMBERLAIN COURT UNIVERSITY CITY, MO 63130
THE OLDEST BUILDING IN UNIVERSITY CITY, MISSOURI



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FARMHOUSE

The Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse, the little white-painted brick house at 6826 Chamberlain Court, is thought to be the oldest building in University City. The year the Sutter-Meyer house was built is not known for certain, but it was probably about 1873. The only possible rival for the title of oldest surviving house in University City is the small building at 8200 Olive. It may be the house sold to William Englert in 1873, but it has been so altered that only the overall shape remains to suggest its age. By contrast, the Sutter-Meyer house has been very little changed over the years and still looks much as it did when built by William Sutter.

The farmhouse is built on land once owned by John Sutter, who was born in Germany in 1815 and came to St. Louis with his family in 1831. About 1850 he built a large house called “The Homestead” on his farm, which was about 120 acres bounded by the present city streets of Sutter, Etzel, Pennsylvania, and Olive Street Road. Here Sutter operated a dairy farm in partnership with Lucien Cabanne (1814-1875), whose own dairy farm occupied much of the present Central West End of St. Louis, west of Union Boulevard. From their depot in downtown St. Louis they supplied some of the city’s major hotels.

John Sutter had sixteen children, of whom only ten reached maturity, and two step-children by two wives. When John Sutter died in 1867, only two of these children had reached maturity. In 1871, his executors divided his farm into smaller parcels, giving one to each child and the widow.

William Sutter, the second eldest, received 8.33 acres bounded on the east by Ferguson Avenue, on the north by Bartmer, on the south by Olive, and on the west by a line that would be an extension of Purcell. William had been

born in 1846 and had married Julia Broking in 1869. He and Julia mortgaged their small farm in 1873, and they may have used that money to build this house. Only two years later, however, in 1875, they sold the farm to Roman Meyer for \$7,500.

Meyer, only a year younger than William Sutter, migrated from Germany. Two weeks after he bought Sutter’s land, Meyer married Maria Jocks and lived at the farmhouse at 6805 Olive Street Road. She had one son of her own, and the two had three more children together. After her death, Roman Meyer married Barbara Ebner, and they had another four children. He died in 1913, and Barbara died in 1936, but their son, Edward E. Meyer, who had been born in the house in 1883, continued to reside there with his wife, Bertha, until his death in 1969.

Roman Meyer worked as a truck farmer, growing fruits and vegetables on his farm, and taking them into St. Louis over Olive Street Road, a plank road that was a major early thoroughfare that connected the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Those trips were made easier in part by John Sutter, on whose original farmland Meyer lived. Sutter had been an early investor in that plank road.

Meyer did not continue in the Sutter business of dairy farming. His livestock consisted only of a plow horse named Nellie, and chickens housed in a coop behind the farmhouse.

The two-story, two-bedroom brick building with a full-length bracketed front porch was surrounded by farm outbuildings, including a kitchen, a barn, the chicken coop and a smoke house. All those buildings are now gone and the farmhouse has been modified



Photos on cover and above by Jay Fram.

by the addition of a brick two-car garage on the north side of the house.

There are no other buildings of this age or socio-economic level in the City of University City. It is significant as the last remaining remnant of farmhouse architecture from the early 1870s in the area that became University City.

The building is now located on a suburban cul-de-sac, surrounded by 1950s-era ranch homes. The old plank road is a major state highway, Olive Boulevard, home to almost 400 businesses, including a thriving international district. The Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse access to that road has been destroyed. This historic home is now, for most people in the area, just a glimpsed roofline from Olive Boulevard, a remnant of the past barely making itself known in the present.

This publication is partially funded by a grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Grant awards do not imply an endorsement of contents by the grantor. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program activity, described above or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20240

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG

In the summer of 2004, volunteers from the Mound City Archaeological Society began investigations around the Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse, under the direction of University City resident and professional archaeologist Dr. Carol Diaz-Granados. The site was surveyed with test units being opened around the property.

A limestone-lined well was discovered, as well as the top of a large brick cistern. Among other items found were dishware, crockery, various toys and an assortment of buttons. All test units have been filled in. The Sutter-Meyer Society plans to reopen the limestone well and cover it in a manner that will allow it to be viewed by visitors to the Farmhouse.



PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and was designated a University City landmark in 1986. A public/private partnership has been formed to ensure long-term preservation of the farmhouse, the oldest building in University City.

The City of University City owns the Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse and has negotiated a long-term lease on the building with the Sutter-Meyer Society, a non-profit organization started by local residents in 2006. Work is underway to rehabilitate the farmhouse to become a community museum where rotating exhibits and educational programs provide information on the history of the farmhouse, University City, St. Louis County and the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Volunteers with the Sutter-Meyer Society will work to rehabilitate the farmhouse, plan exhibits, manage the museum and make educational programs available to the community.

For information on opportunities to join in the effort to preserve the Sutter-Meyer Farmhouse and establish a community museum, please contact:

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