



Kirkwood (Images of America)

Vicki Berger Erwin for the Kirkwood Public Library

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In St. Louis in the 1850s, citizens were tiring of the crowded and unhealthy conditions of urban living, but there were few convenient alternatives for those who worked in the city. When the Pacific Railroad decided to build a line through an outlying area then known as Collins Station, Hiram Leffingwell and Richard Elliott seized an opportunity and bought the surrounding land. Using Leffingwells experience in planning additions to the city, he and Elliott developed the first planned suburban community west of the Mississippi River. The area was named Kirkwood after the chief engineer for the Pacific Railroad, James Kirkwood, who chose the railroads route. Kirkwood officially incorporated in 1865. Today, it is still referred to as the Queen of the Suburbs for its housing stock, convenient transportation, shopping, and excellent schools.



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