

Chitwood-Prigge House, 750 Prigge Rd., Spanish Lake, c. 1798



The Chitwood-Prigge House stands on part of a tract of 250 acres granted by the Spanish colonial government to Richard Chitwood in 1798. Recent tree ring analysis has shown that he probably started this house at that time. It resembles French vertical log houses in its profile. Chitwood served as a major in the War of 1812 and later as a justice of the peace before his death in 1822. Charles F. Prigge, a native of Germany, bought these 24 acres of the Chitwood tract in 1845 and died here in 1884. He was described as a “well known farmer, prominent social and political figure of the community.” The present owners began restoring the house in 1982.

Fort Belle Fontaine, 13399 Bellefontaine Rd., 1805



Fort Belle Fontaine had been established in 1805 not only as a military post, but also a trading post for the Sac and Fox Indians. The Indian Factory, as the trading place was called, was closed in 1808 and its stores moved to Fort Madison and fort Osage. The military function of Bell Fontaine was continued but faced with tow major obstacles, both related to its position on the river lowlands. Situated below the bluffs, the fort’s strategic effectiveness could easily be negated by enemy firing from the heights. In addition, proximity to the river bank caused flooding which brought disease and rapid deterioration of the log structures. Under General Bissell’s direction, Fort Belle Fontaine was rebuilt in 1810 in larger scale on the bluff high above the river. Construction was done with logs, in the manner of the old post.

Although of larger size and better materials, the new Fort Belle Fontaine did not survive. As early as 1817, reports declared that the storehouses were in need of repair and by 1821 the buildings were in decay, which made a new relocation urgent. In 1826 the city of Carondelet donated land for a new military establishment south of St. Louis

and the troops were moved to Jefferson Barracks. Excavations at the site of Fort Belle Fontaine have been conducted since 1992, and the results have been encouraging. Stone wall foundations of a building were found, which was identified as one of the officers' quarters.

Grand Staircase, Missouri Hills, 13300 Bellefontaine Rd., Spanish Lake, c. 1938



Located immediately in front of the site of Fort Belle Fontaine, the Grand Staircase is actually a series of separate staircases, some in pairs, which ascend the steep bluffs of the Missouri River to the site which houses the Missouri Hills Complex of the Division of Youth Services. Originally operated as the Missouri Hills Home for boys by the city of St. Louis, the detention home was recently transferred to the state. The staircase culminates in an observation terrace which offers an impressive view across the Missouri River.

The staircase is part of an extensive project undertaken by the Works Progress Administration in the late 1930s to create a public park on the grounds of the home, which were city property. In 1986 the site, excluding the school, was acquired by the St. Louis County department of Parks and Recreation. It is eventually to be restored and returned to public use.

Wilson Larimore House, 11475 Lilac Ave., Spanish Lake, c. 1860, NR



One of the most imposing farmhouses in the county is the Wilson Larimore House, an example of agricultural progress and the evolution of the architectural tastes of

successful farmers, ready to measure their lifestyle in city terms. Wilson Larimore's farmstead was much admired by Missouri's agricultural society. In 1866 the St. Louis Agricultural and Mechanical Association Fair, the awarded most prestigious show in Missouri, awarded Larimore's property the premium "for best improved and most highly cultivated farm not less than 500 acres. The annual report of the fair included an extensive article titled "the Model Farm of W.L. Larimore," in which all aspects of his farming practice were examined. Greatest space was devoted to the house which was "erected of the best materials, and in the most substantial manner with a view to make it most convenient and pleasant." In the reviewer's opinion, the house would "in point of architectural design and exterior and interior finish, rank equal to many of our best city residences." Larimore, a native of Kentucky, was indeed a well-to-do framer, who brought to St. Louis a train of wagons with household goods and purchased land for 10-12 dollars per acre. His Italianate house, boasting "rich and costly" details, such as a cupola, wood finishes, curved staircase, and Italian marble fireplaces, indicated the St. Louis was close to the farmer not only with its markets, but also as an aesthetic example.

**"Locust Grove," 1810 Redman Rd./11749 Talbott Court, Spanish Lake,
1849**



The earliest farmhouse to survive in Spanish Lake is "Locust Grove" built in 1849 on part of the original holdings of Daniel Bissell. Robert Hughes was a steamboat captain and is said to have farmed his land by himself. The Federal style house, reminiscent of the Bissell House, seems to confirm that many new farmsteads and residences in the area ere fashioned after this famous predecessor.

**Spanish Lake Blacksmith Shop, 12223 Bellefontaine Rd., Spanish Lake,
c. 1881**



The Spanish Lake Blacksmith Shop is one of the several buildings that survive along the old business intersection, between Bellefontaine, Parker, and Spanish Pond roads. It was built by Jacob Wilhelm, a German settler. The shop was passed on to his son and other blacksmith's until recently.

John Henry Twillman House, 11840 Bellefontaine Rd., Spanish Lake, 1870



This two-story brick house on Bellefontaine Road facing Redman Road was built in 1870 by John Henry Twillman in the vernacular Greek Revival style. Twillman came to St. Louis County, from Germany with his parents in 1842. John bought this property after his marriage to Louisa Nolte in 1850. After John Henry Twillman died in 1882, his farm was divided up among his family. His widow and son Louis Henry Twillman ran this particular portion of the farm. In 1945 the house was purchased by Carl and Sally Plitt, who opened the Meadowlark Restaurant here. In 1974 the house became the Old Homestead Restaurant established by John and Mary Spiller. In 2005 the house was purchased by the Spanish Lake Community association who plans to renovate the home and act as a community center for residents of Spanish Lake.