



METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

Metropolitan Historical Commission
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
Telephone: (615) 862-7970

To: Metropolitan Council
From: Metropolitan Historical Commission, Staff
Date: December 10, 2021
Re: BL2021-1025

An ordinance to amend the Geographic Information Systems Street and Alley Centerline Layer for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, by renaming Woodruff Street, between Gallatin Pike and the Peggy Street and Linda Lane intersection, to “David McMurry Way” (Proposal Number 2021M-007SR-001).

Located in Madison, Woodruff Street runs slightly northwest from Gallatin Pike to the intersection of Linda Lane and Peggy Street, just west of the railroad underpass (Figure 1). Although it was platted almost 100 years ago, the origins for the road are much older and relate to the historic center of activity in Madison. Woodruff Street, Madison Street, and Douglas Street (now called Madison Station Boulevard) are located on land once owned by prominent Madisonian, Charles E. Woodruff; Douglas and Woodruff Streets were likely named for him and his descendants.¹

Woodruff purchased the property in 1850 from the area’s namesake, Madison Stratton. Railroad tracks would soon run across the

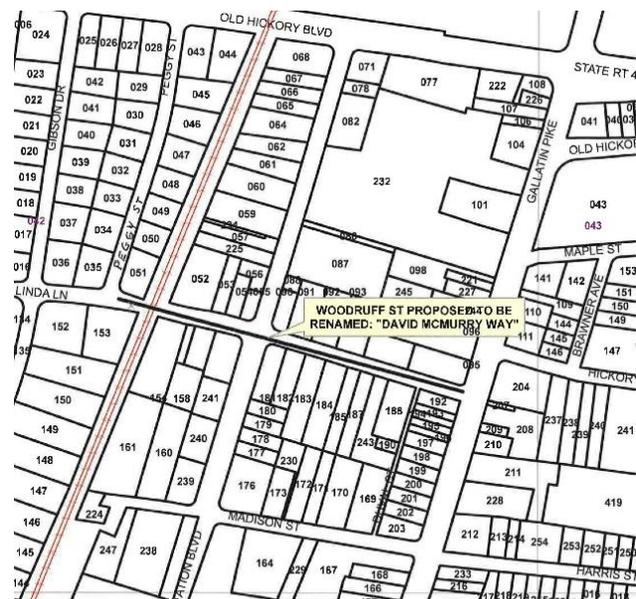


Figure 1: Exhibit, Proposal Number 2021M-007SR-001

¹ Douglas Street and an Unnamed Street renamed Madison Station Boulevard by ORD. BL2018-1344, which passed third reading on November 6, 2018. For information about those streets, please see the Historical Commission’s [report](#) submitted to Metropolitan Council on October 29, 2018.

property, served by the Madison Station railroad stop on the Woodruff property. The Madison Station railroad stop would be a center of activity for the area, and Madison Street (aka Madison Station Road and Madison Avenue), the road leading from Gallatin Pike to the station, appears on early maps of the area. Guy Alan Bockmon, author of *Madison Station*, states:

In a deed registered on 14 September 1850, Madison Stratton sold to Charles E. Woodruff the land upon which would be erected Madison Station and across part of which would be cleared Depot Lane, since renamed Madison Street. ... On the east side of the tracks upon which would run the trains of cars of both the E&K [Edgefield & Kentucky] and the L&N [Louisville & Nashville] line, someone, presumably Madison Stratton, sited and built Madison Station. ... By 21 May 1857, the date of charter of Madison Station Post Office, traffic was moving through the station at mile 177.94.²

According to Bockmon, Charles E. Woodruff, who arrived in Middle Tennessee from Ohio in 1839, was the wealthiest man in the area for decades.³ He was a farmer and merchant, operating a successful grocery on his property along Gallatin Pike, at the intersection of the road leading to Madison Station. Madison Presbyterian Church first formed in a room over his general store and Woodruff later sold a portion of his land to the church trustees for the church's first building. While Woodruff's property appears on Foster's 1871 map, along with the road leading from Gallatin Pike to Madison Station, by this time his son William H. Woodruff was operating the family store (Figure 2).⁴ In 1900, William and his wife Tabitha sold the family store to E.R. Doolittle, another influential Madisonian.⁵

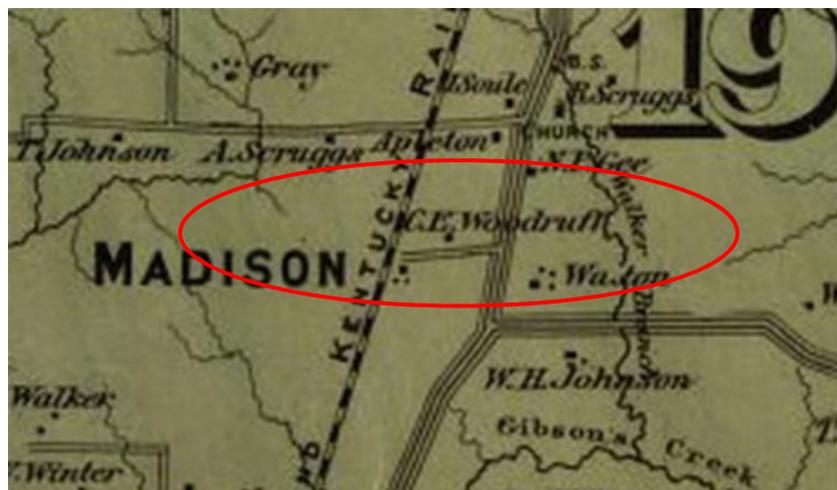


Figure 2: "Map of Davidson County Tennessee, from actual surveys made by order of the county court of Davidson County," 1871, Surveyed and Mapped by Wilbur F. Foster. Source: Library of Congress.

² Guy Alan Bockmon, *Madison Station* (Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press 1997), 59.

³ Bockmon, 71.

⁴ "Map of Davidson County Tennessee, from actual surveys made by order of the county court of Davidson County," 1871, available online through the Library of Congress, accessed 8 December 2021 <<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3963d.la000870/>>. Bockmon, 71.

⁵ Bockmon, 103.

Bockmon reports that Sarah Elizabeth Woodruff, a daughter of Charles E. Woodruff, married William Bennett “W.B.” Douglas (aka Douglass, the historical record contains both spellings), who was born in Saundersville, Tennessee.⁶ In 1892, Charles E. Woodruff conveyed a portion of his property to Sarah,

‘Being situated at Madison Station Beginning at a point in the center of the Gallatin Turnpike where the road to Madison Station intersects said Turnpike,’ west to the railroad then north to ‘the North side of a 24 foot lane crossing the railroad on a bridge...’ The property lines continued around others, skirted south of ‘the School House lot’ to the Turnpike and thence south to the beginning. The ‘lane crossing the railroad’ would become Woodruff Street [according to Bockmon].⁷

Historical Commission staff did not complete detailed genealogy research for the Woodruff family, or deed research for all neighboring parcels, but staff was able to determine that Sarah Elizabeth Woodruff Douglass and W.B. Douglass eventually settled in Franklin, Kentucky, where W.B. would become president of the Franklin Kentucky Mills at Gallatin, Tennessee, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Franklin Kentucky Mills at Franklin.⁸ Mary “Elizabeth” Douglass, their daughter, married Wendell H. Levine and settled in Nashville, where Wendell was an attorney in partnership with his brother Alfred at Levine & Levine.⁹ These relationships connect the names of Woodruff and Douglas streets and the Douglas-Levine Subdivision to the Woodruff, Douglass, and Levine families.

Woodruff Street was platted by the *Douglas-Levine Subdivision*, recorded on May 6, 1924 (Figure 3).¹⁰ The Douglas-Levine plat shows Woodruff Street, with a width of 50 to 50.5 feet, running northwest from its terminus at Gallatin Pike, crossing Douglas Street, and continuing northwest about 115 feet.¹¹ It makes a slight southwest angle as it approaches the railroad to align with a rock fence. Gallatin Pike and L&N Railroad serve as the east and west boundaries of the subdivision, respectively. The Davidson County Court accepted Woodruff Street as a district road in two sections: first, “from Douglas St. easterly for about 373.4 ft” in 1935, and second, “from its present terminus to the Gallatin Pike, a distance of about 365 feet” in 1937.¹² At the same October term hearing in 1937, the Court reviewed appropriations to the Davidson County Highway Commission for the district road fund, which included appropriations for Douglas Street and Woodruff Street. The appropriation allotted \$1,250.00 for Douglas Street, from

⁶ “W.B. Douglass Dies in Franklin, KY,” *Nashville Tennessean*, Wednesday Morning, 18 June 1930, 3.

⁷ Bockmon, 83, citing Deed Book 178, pages 82-3, RODC [sic, should be book 168].

⁸ “W.B. Douglass Dies in Franklin, KY.”

⁹ *1916 City Directory*, Marshall-Bruce-Polk Company Publishers, Nashville, TN, 427.

¹⁰ *Douglas-Levine Subdivision*. Recorded on May 6, 1924, Plat Book 547, page 44, RODC. Several real estate transfers between Douglas and Levine appear in newspapers in 1924: *Nashville Banner*, 21 May 1924, 18, and *Tennessean*, 21 May 1924, 14.

¹¹ Measurements estimated according to lot size. The “Road” is the road currently known as Madison Street. Woodruff residence on Lot 16.

¹² Quarterly Court of Davidson County, Minute Book T, page 405, October Term 1935 and Minute Book V, page 17, October Term 1937. While houses were located between Douglas and the railroad, the county did not maintain this section of the road.

Woodruff Street to Halls Lane (aka Old Hickory Boulevard), and \$750.00 for Woodruff Street, from “present terminus” to Gallatin Pike.¹³

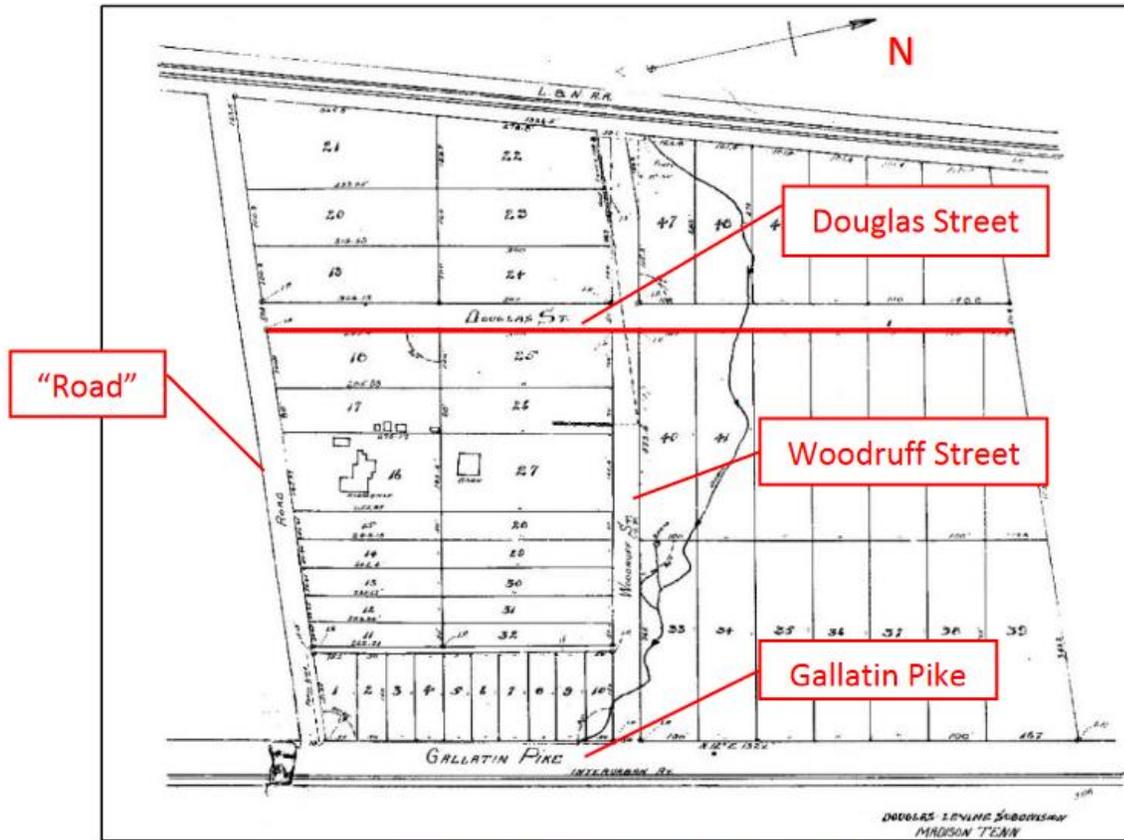


Figure 3: Douglas-Levine Subdivision, 1924.

In 1940, the plat for the *Finnland Heights Part One* subdivision shows Woodruff east of the railroad and its continuation through the railroad underpass to the west side of the tracks (Figure 4).¹⁴ Notations of “Woodruff” around the boundaries of the plat indicate property ownership. By the recording of *Finnland Heights Part Two* in 1947, the surrounding property was owned by Ramsey (Figure 5).¹⁵ The plat also shows a section of Woodruff Street, now known as Linda Lane, located on the west side of the railroad.¹⁶

¹³ Quarterly Court of Davidson County, Minute Book V, page 15, October Term 1937. The appropriation was for the Quarter ending January 31, 1938.

¹⁴ *Finnland Heights, Part One*. Recorded on May 13, 1940, Plat Book 1130, page 10, RODC.

¹⁵ *Finnland Heights, Part Two*. Recorded on April 26, 1947, Plat Book 1424, page 7, RODC. The right-of-way and underpass are referenced in *Mary F. Finn et vir to John L. Ramsey et ux*, recorded on May 17, 1946, Deed Book 1361, page 242, RODC.

¹⁶ Historical Commission staff did not research the naming of Linda Lane, but Linda Lane appears on the plat for Blair Heights Section Six, recorded January 30, 1956, Book 2331, page 98, RODC.

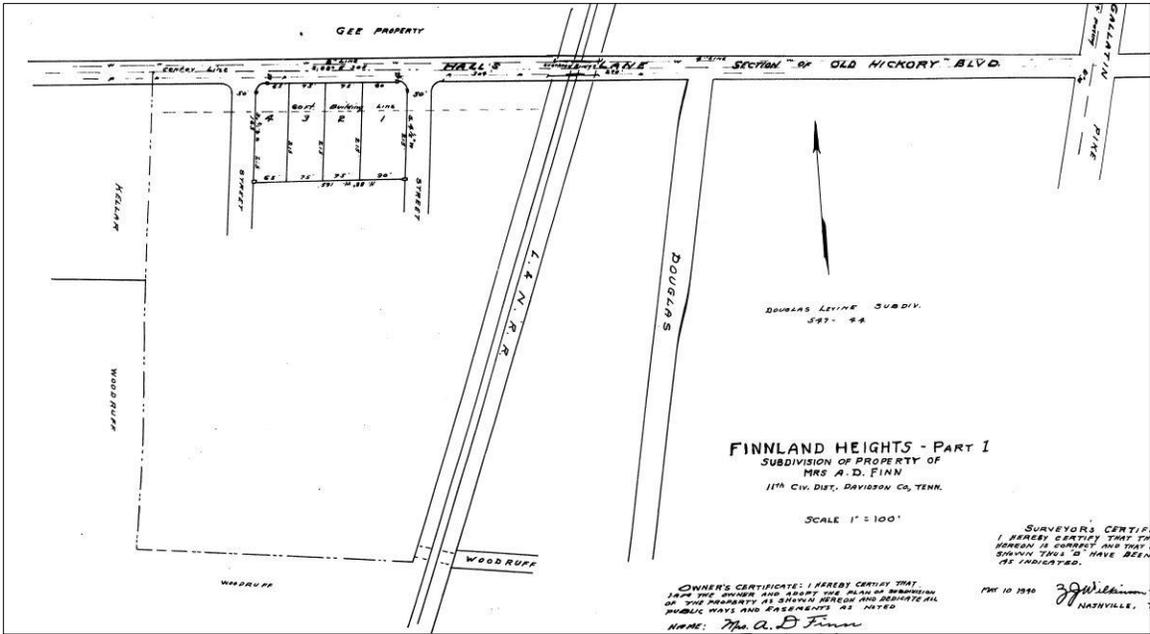


Figure 4: Finland Heights - Part I, 1940.

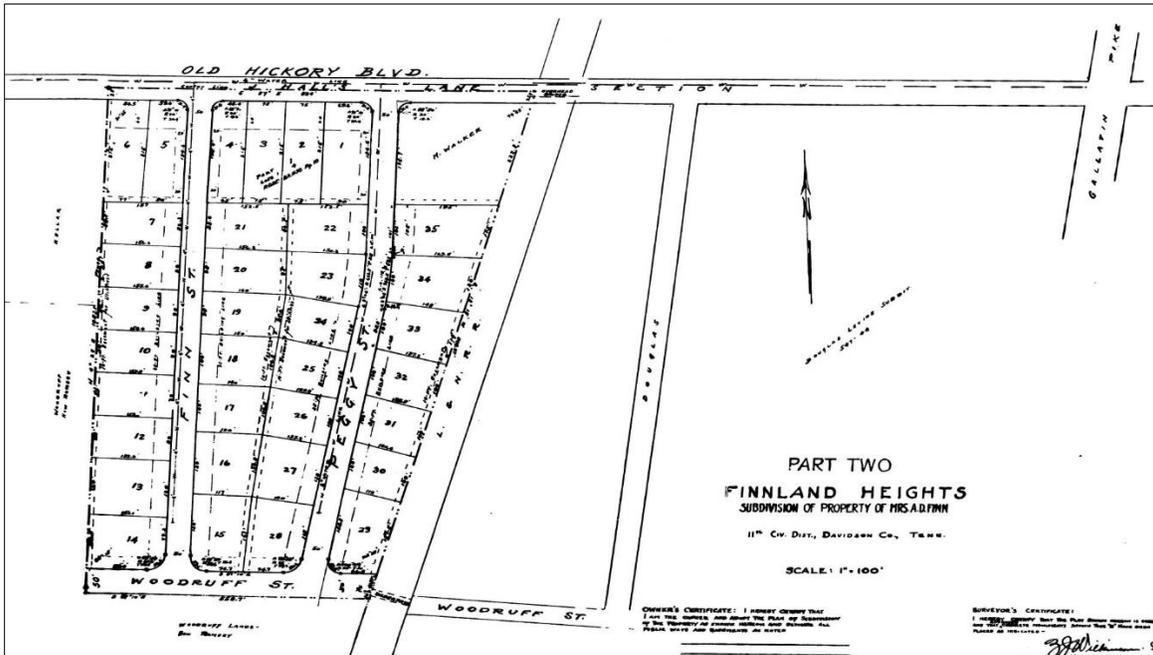


Figure 5: Finland Heights - Part Two, 1947.

Summary:

Woodruff Street was platted in 1924, accepted as a county road for placement on the General Road Map of Davidson County in October 1935, and extended to the east in October 1937.