

History Happenings

In Preparation of #9's 150th Anniversary

January 2026 - Issue 42

Charter Received December 8, 1878



The Claymont neighborhood swim club was also considered as a potential lodge move from 12481 Ladue Rd., although this opportunity was dismissed without going to the lodge floor. The west of 141, near Kehrs Mill Rd. neighborhood and swim club was not an upgrade from 12481 Ladue Rd. and their smaller club room would have required much repair and maintenance. The portion of the neighborhood that #9 would have controlled was in the middle neighborhood, creating an unattractive and perhaps problematic traffic flow to and from the prospective footprint. Furthermore, the Claymont location, at the time, was deemed to be “at the end of the world.”

One other “swim club move opportunity” involved the offered swapping of 12481 Ladue Rd. for the Creve Coeur Country Club (behind the American Legion on Olive). What one would today call a “city club,” the Creve Coeur Country Club consisted of a swimming pool and a building. The proposer was more motivated by tax laws than an equitable swap. Consequently, the offer made little sense to #9. Today the property in an industrial complex.



Image: From the Bath & Tennis Club of West County Facebook page. This was likely taken at the opening of Claymont in 1961. Retrieved 1.19.2026

In all of these “move opportunity” scenarios was an underlying sales value assumption of 12481 Ladue Rd. Too often, officers and members of lodge #9 failed to remember that the Elks’ purchase of 12481 Ladue Rd. came with a county granted special use permit that had residential development restrictions. During the time period of the various sell and move opportunities, only one workable offer on 12481 Ladue Rd. was received. It came from someone who planned to build multi-family condos, contingent upon getting the property rezoned. In reality, 6 1/2 acres on Ladue Rd. is plenty large for an Elks Lodge, but rather small for a home builder.

Eternally an Elk

The #9 Notables at Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum

Many prominent St. Louisans interred at Bellefontaine were also Lodge #9 members.

Thanks to our friend, Sandy Schneider, Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum volunteer researcher, we are delighted to introduce you to yet another #9 Notable.

Cyrus F. Blanke , 1862 - 1941 **Purveyor of Coffee and Big Ideas**



Image: Vintage Blanke's Coffee Tin; Google search 01.2026.

Chances are, you started your day with a cup of coffee. For most of us, coffee is an important part of our morning! We can quickly brew it at home, stop at a coffee shop, or head to a drive-through. Our 'notable' Elk this month played a big part in making St. Louis a coffee capital of the country shortly after Lodge #9 was founded.

In 1862, Cyrus F. Blanke was the fifth of ten children born to German immigrant parents in Marine, Illinois.

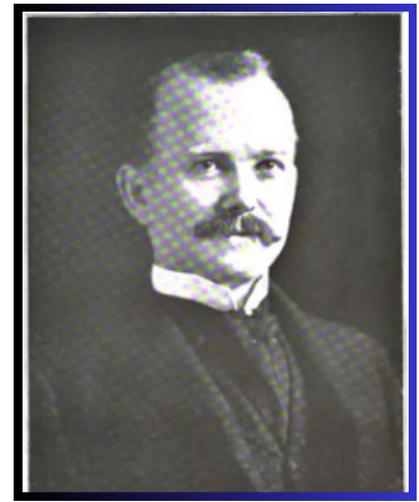
The family moved to St. Louis for better opportunities and C. F. finished his education here. At age 16, he worked as a clerk in a retail grocery store, and then for two years as a clerk in a wholesale tobacco company. Next, he worked for Steinwender-Stoffregen Coffee Company at Broadway and Clark, first as a collector, then as a traveling salesman for seven years.

When he was 28, C. F. went into business for himself. C. F. Blanke & Company sold teas, roasted coffee, and spices. During this time many grocers were roasting coffee beans and packaging their own brands. By the early 1900s, St. Louis Chamber of Commerce touted that the city had more than two dozen roasters, making it one of the country's largest inland coffee distributors at that time.

C. F. wisely invested in other companies which could support his own. He became president of St. Louis Tin and Sheet Metal Working Company, allowing him to produce coffee pots and cans in his own kilns. His in-house lithographers and printers made labels and advertising. Some of the large, decorative metal boxes with the Blanke brand used by grocers are still sought by avid collectors.

C. F. was a master at advertising. He made sure that his brand name was visible on sides of buildings, on wagons and railroad cars, hotel dining rooms, and in Tony Faust's Oyster House, one of the finest restaurants in the Midwest.

Knowing that visitors to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition would want coffee, C. F. was on its Board of Directors. Always interested in Ulysses S. Grant, he purchased Grant's Cabin for \$8,000 so it could be disassembled, moved to the fairgrounds, then re-assembled as one of his coffee houses. After the Fair closed, C. F. sold it to August Busch, who moved it back near its original location, near the current Grant's Farm. C. F. used his own thoroughbred horse in his advertising and took him to the opening of the World's Fair in 1904. He offered it to Theodore Roosevelt to ride in the opening ceremony which he did proudly.



*Image: Cyrus F. Blanke
lafayettesquarearchives.com
Retrieved 1.19.2026*



*Image: Frederick D. Grant (c), son of President Ulysses S. Grant, Cyrus F. Blanke (L), and a military officer in front of the log cabin built by Grant in the mid 1800s.
Retrieved 1.19.2026 from Facebook, posted by Historium*

It seemed C. F. was successful in all his endeavors, but one. The largest, most expensive project to bear his name did not become a reality. In 1901 it was reported that C. F. and architect Samuel Friede were raising \$1.5 million to build a 700 feet tall aerial globe at the World's Fair. Its circumference would be 1000 feet and be built entirely of steel. The globe would feature a coliseum for sporting events, a palm garden, theatre, and a "moving" café.

Elevators and bridges would connect the levels of the globe, and an observation level would give the spectators, as many as 25,000 at a time, a fantastic view of everything below. The blueprint to build such a spectacle would be no less than 5 feet by 10 feet. And, of course, the only coffee to be served at the Friede Aerial Globe would be C. F. Blanke's Faust brand coffee.

The advertising was so detailed and convincing that people assumed it was a certainty to be built, and that ground had already been broken for this engineering feat. Shares sold for \$1 each. The admission to the globe would be \$.50, and thousands of people would travel great distances to enter this wonder. Return for their investment would be a sure thing. However, the sales of shares fell far short of the \$1.5 million needed, so the project rather quietly was scrapped, prompting some investors to lose their money. Some souvenirs of the aerial globe such as coffee containers, salt and pepper shakers, and coffee pots can still be found online and in antique shops. (More information about Blanke and the Friede aerial globe can be found at [lafayettesquarearchives.com/1901:CF Blanke and the Aerial Globe](http://lafayettesquarearchives.com/1901:CF%20Blanke%20and%20the%20Aerial%20Globe)).

C. F. continued to promote his company and be seen as a civic leader as well. He joined several fraternal organizations in addition to the Elks Lodge #9. He was a member of the Masons, the Moolah Temple of the Mystic Shrine, Knights of Pythias, Sunset Country Club, Century Boat Club, Chamber of Commerce. He was a Republican, and a Lutheran. In 1910 C. F. was a member of the Million Population Club, a group of prominent businessmen and civic leaders who promoted St. Louis in hopes of reaching a million in population before the 1910 census.

During the First World War, Blanke produced an instant coffee that he was able to supply the army. But after World War I the country went into an economic recession, and St. Louis was affected. In 1921-1922, C. F. was leading the fund-raising for a breadline for unemployed men, the first in the area. The St. Louis Star and Times reported in December of 1921 that over 3,000 men and boys were served coffee and coffee cake that day. Other days there were almost 5,000 waiting to be served.

By 1932, the Depression era, his coffee and the tin companies were experiencing trouble. Bank loans were frozen, and although the companies argued they had assets they were put into receivership. Losses were reported after that, and by 1935 the company was forced out of business.

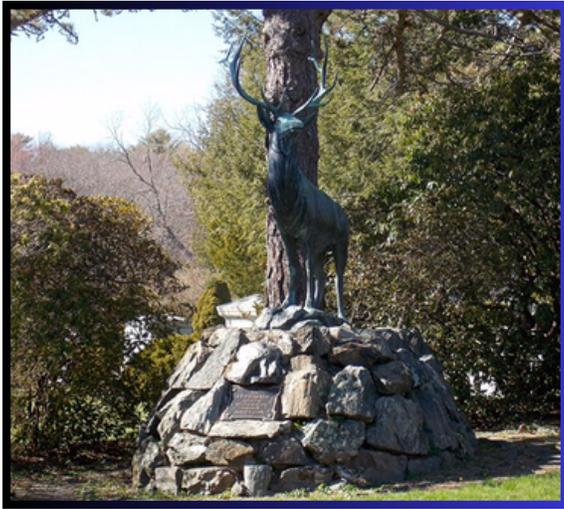
The financial pressure may have contributed to C. F.'s wife Eugenia having a nervous breakdown. She died in 1931. The next year, C. F. married again. But this wife would be the witness to the loss of the company, and a series of lawsuits reducing C. F. even further. C. F.'s lawyer explained the situation this way: "He watched the business prosper and amass upwards of a million dollars. In his declining years he saw his business fail, lost this million in his struggles to save it, and saw the complete destruction of all that he had built." *(That million dollars in the late 1920s would be more than \$18.5 million buying power in today's market.)*

In 1941 C. F. fell inside a downtown bank doorway, and his injury kept him confined to his home. He died of kidney failure in his home the following year at the age of 80. His burial in his family plot in Bellefontaine Cemetery was not reported in the newspaper. It was a sad ending to a business that lasted more than 50 years.



Image: Lafayette Square Archives,. Retrieved 1.19.2026

Elks REST Elsewhere



*Image: Evergreen Cemetery, Portland, Maine
Elks Lodge #188 REST*

On Monday afternoon, July 24, 1922, Portland Maine Lodge #188 held a dedication ceremony for their Elks REST in nearby Evergreen Cemetery. Governor George Baxter provided the following opening remarks: "When I think of what this organization stands for and what it can do for this country during these troubling times... I think it is most appropriate that you should dedicate this plot of land to your absent brothers. No close relationship can exist, nor is there anything more sacred than the love of one brother for another, and that is what your lodge stands for - brotherly love, brotherly affection and brotherly service."

An outdoor lodge room was erected in front the monument, with each officer station raised on a platform and decorated with evergreen and potted plants. At the end of the dedication ritual, a marching band played the Star Spangled Banner as a large American Flag was raised from the monument to unveil it.

The bronze Elk, paid for by subscriptions from members of the Portland Lodge, was sculptured more than a year ago, but according to the Portland, Maine Express and Advertiser, "circumstances were such that this dedication exercises were laid over until yesterday, when they were carried out in a manner which could not be improved upon in any way."

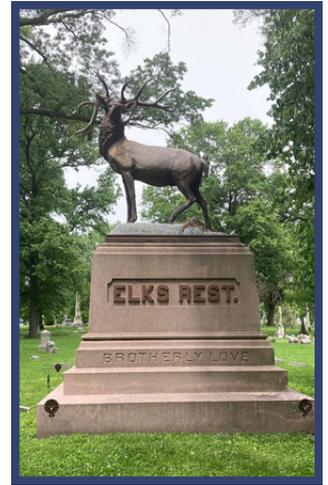
Evergreen Cemetery in Portland Maine was founded in 1855. Originally consisting of only 45 acres, it has since grown to occupy 239 acres. It is currently the largest cemetery in Maine and holds the remains of approximately 1,400 veterans of the Civil War.



*Image: Evergreen Cemetery, Portland, Maine
Civil War Remembrance*

"Restoring the St. Louis ELKS REST" Brick Campaign

The Elks REST at Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum is the final resting place for 33 of our brethren. Since the 1890's, the Elks REST monument has watched over this sacred spot. Now, worn and weathered by time and the elements, it seems appropriate to restore the Elks' Rest to its original stately appearance.



By replacing the damaged Elk, improving the individual markers, and tending to the landscaping, we can move forward with certainty that we are doing all we can to honor our fellow Elks.

To achieve that goal, the History Committee has launched a fundraising campaign to build a 'Heritage Courtyard' at the base of the Elk guarding the entrance of Lodge #9. Bricks are 4" x 8" and are available two colors Nutmeg (\$125) or premium option Regimental Red (\$150).

Each brick will be engraved with the name(s) or phrase(s) of your choice; 3 lines of text, 20 characters per line.*

For questions, please contact Beth Schnettler - beth12523@gmail.com.

To place an order, complete this form and send with payment to Elks Lodge #9, 12481 Ladue Road, Creve Coeur, MO 63141, attention Beth Schnettler.

Make checks payable to "Elks Lodge #9" with the note "Elks REST Brick Campaign" on the memo line. Payment can also be made through the Club Room Bar register.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 3: _____

**The History committee reserves the right to assess all orders to ensure all words and phrases used are appropriate for placement on the Lodge grounds.*

