

Lots 188 and 189 of McGee's Addition

Toeneboehn Real Estate Speculation in Early Kansas City, MO - 1857-1859

Principals

Elijah Milton "Milt" McGee (1819-1873)

Christian Wilhelm Leopold Tonebohn

BIRTH 20 MAY 1809 • Tundern, Hameln-Pyrmont, Lower Saxony, Germany

DEATH ABT. 2 MAY 1860 • St Louis, Missouri

Married: Abt. 1836

Caroline Louise Loges

BIRTH 17 MAR 1815 • Hamburg, Germany

DEATH 31 JUL 1896 • St Louis, Missouri

Introduction

According to Tonebohn/Toeneboehn Family Legend: Christian Tonebohn and his wife, Caroline (the author's 2nd maternal grandparents), and 6 children immigrated to America from Germany in 1854, landing in New Orleans, LA. They traveled from New Orleans to Minnesota to join a wagon train. The wagon train, passing through Iowa, was ambushed by Indians and members of the family were killed. Part of the family traveled on to Minnesota and part remained in Iowa, settling in Buchanan County.

In Oct. 1856 the Tonebohn's moved from Independence, Buchanan County, Iowa to St Louis - leaving daughters: Amelia Tonebohn and her new husband, Daniel Maytag and Hannah Tonebohn and her new husband, Edward Gerelt in Iowa. They settled on, what was then rural farm land, southwest of Saint Louis, MO, now defined as Tennessee Ave, between Miami St. and Winnebago St.

Meanwhile, in 1857, in what was then called Kansas, MO (aka Kansas City, MO), Elijah Milton McGee "... *predicted that the fledgling settlement of the Town of Kansas would flower into one of the most enterprising settlements of the Midwest.* In 1857, he platted a subdivision south of the city known today as "McGee's Addition" to encourage people to travel south to his newly-built hotel at 16th and Grand Ave. This hotel, commonly referred to as Planter's, Farmer's Exchange, and most commonly McGee's Hotel, became a landmark during the Border Wars and the headquarters of many pro-slavery men who commonly stormed into Kansas Territory."

Who was Elijah Milton "Milt" McGee? Again, from the above referenced Blog:

"Rambunctious. Self-driven. Passionate. Enterprising. Pro-slavery. These are just a selection of words that could be easily used to describe the temperaments of the McGee boys, sons of James H. McGee and his wife, Eleanor, that were present when the City of Kansas was yet established and were instrumental in various ways in the growth of a city."

Milt McGee was the 4th son of James and Eleanor McGee. He apparently struck gold in California, returned to the Kansas City area and bought 240 acres of prime land located in what is now the heart of the city.

"In 1857, the population of the city was 700; only 21 people claimed to live in McGee's Addition and eight buildings had been built. By 1860, just three years after platting the "preposterous" McGee's Addition, the area boasted a population of 2,319 and had 469 buildings."

Christian and Caroline Tonebohn bought a portion of Lot 189 of McGee's Addition in June, 1857 (see Deed below) for the tidy sum of \$500 - that's about \$20,500 in today's dollars.

INTERESTING TO IMMIGRANTS!!



BUY YOURSELVES HOMES!!

E. M. MCGEE
OFFERS SOME OF THE FINEST
CITY PROPERTY!
FOR SALE AT A BARGAIN.
GOOD BUSINESS LOTS OFFERED VERY CHEAP!
HIS RESIDENCE LOTS
Are unsurpassed for beauty of location, easily improved, and finely adapted to make Desirable Homes.
McGEE'S ADDITION is decidedly the best portion of Kansas to buy property. You buy cheap, improvements cost but little, and you have the benefit of one of the rapid increase in the value of real estate. Business is rapidly moving in that direction, and many new houses are opening on Grand Avenue.
Persons desiring to buy, can apply to me at my residence in McGee's Addition, or to C. H. VINCENT, Clerk Court of Common Pleas, at the Court House, Kansas City, Mo.
E. M. MCGEE.

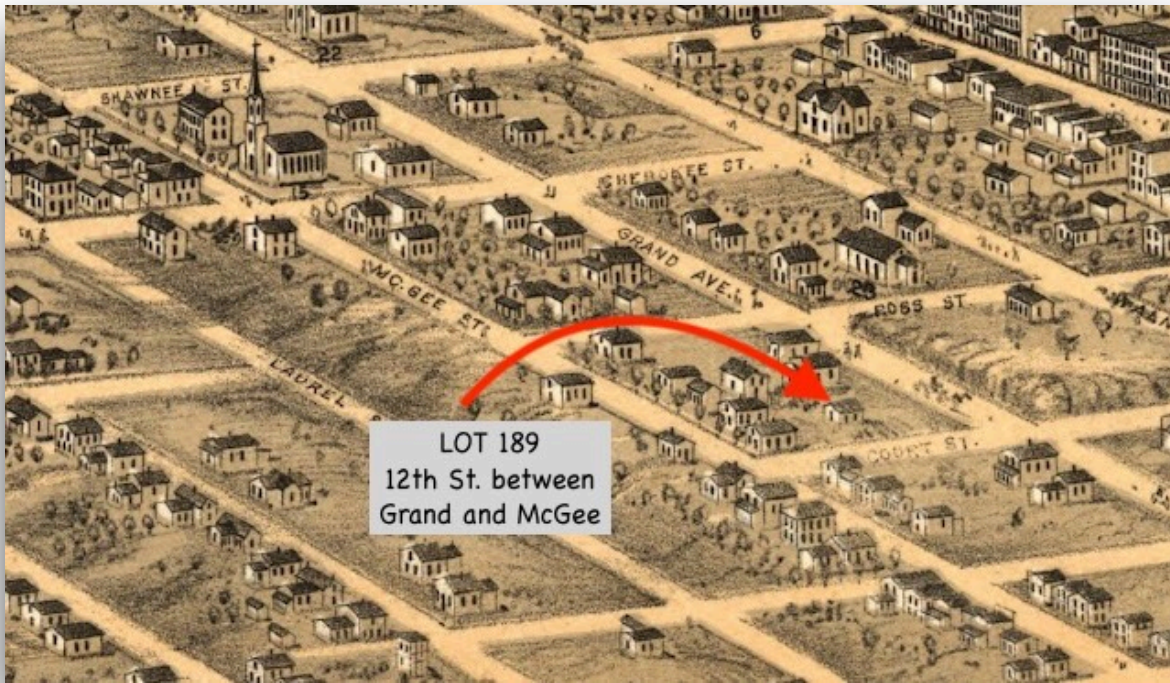
*Elijah M. McGee & wife
To
Christian Tonebohn*

Know all men by these presents that eve Elijah M. McGee and Sarah A McGee of the City of Kansas in the County of Jackson in the State of Missouri for and in consideration of the sum of five hundred dollars to us in hand paid by Christian Tonebohn do hereby grant bargain sell and convey unto the said Christian Tonebohn the following described Real estate situate in the County of Jackson and State of Missouri and being part of the east half of the south west quarter of section number (5) five in Township forty nine (49) and Range (33) thirty three known as McGee's addition to the City of Kansas, viz.

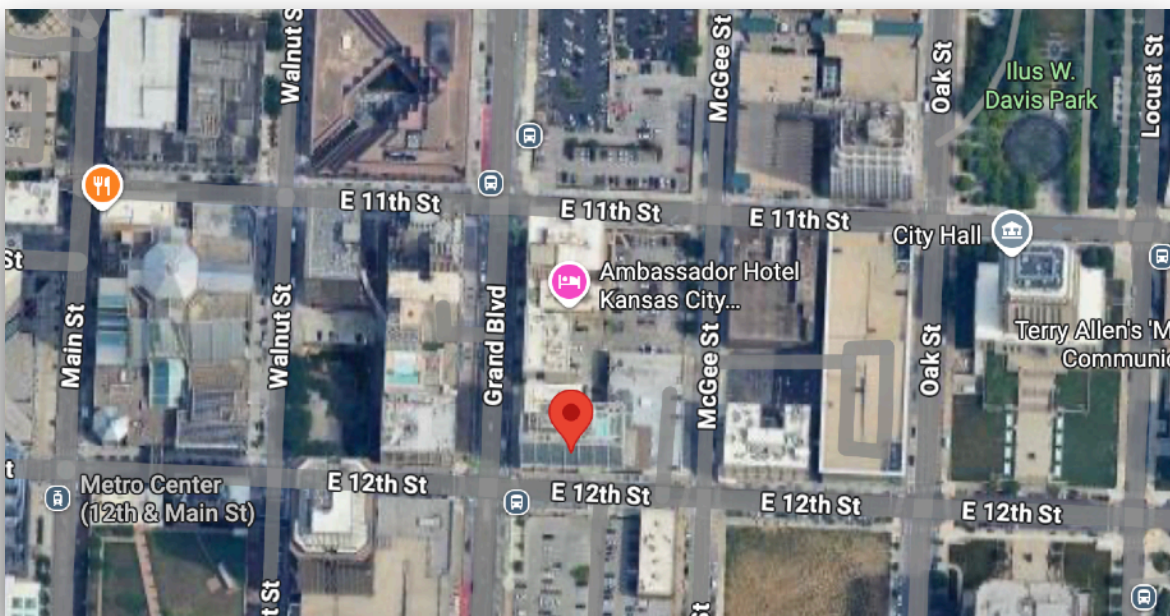
Lot number one hundred and eighty nine (189) in block number thirteen (13) as marked and designated in the plat of said McGee addition to the City of Kansas recorded in the Records office of said Jackson County

Portion of Lot 189 in Block 13 (50' X 132') or, as defined in the Deed:
East Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 5 in Township 49 and Range 33.

Earth Coordinates: 39°06'00.1"N 94°34'49.7"W



MC GEE'S ADDITION AS SHOWN IN THE 1869 "BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF KANSAS CITY"



Lot 189 purchased in 1857 is now in the heart of Kansas City, MO. Ross St. became 11th St. and Court St. became 12th St.

Christian and Caroline Tonebohn sold their portion of Lot 189 the following spring, Mar. 1858, to John E Strodman for **\$1800**. That's \$167,000 in modern dollars - a 360% increase in value in a 10 months.

This Indenture, made and entered into this twenty second day of March in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fifty eight by and between Christian Tonebohn and Caroline Tonebohn of the County of Jackson and State of Missouri of the first part, and John E. Strodman of the same County and State aforesaid of the second part, Witnesseth: That the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of eighteen hundred dollars to them in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have given, granted, bargained, and sold & by these presents do give, grant, bargain, sell, alien, convey, and confirm unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, certain tract or parcel of Land, lying and being in the County of Jackson and State aforesaid, namely: Lot No. one hundred & eighty nine (189) in Block No. thirteen (13) as described in the Town Plot of McEus addition to the City of Kansas as recorded, to have and to hold, the said tract piece or

John Strodman turned a profit the same day by selling Lot 189 again - this time for \$1900. This time the lot sold to Henry and Mary Grosskopf. The Grosskopf's moved on Lot 189 as well, selling to a fellow named Thomas Lockridge. In fact, there are numerous Lot 189 transactions with dates extending to 1881, when there was Quit Claim Deed on Lot 189 that referenced the June 1857 original purchase.

QUIT-CLAIM DEED.

This Indenture, Made on the twenty sixth day of February, A. D. One Thousand Eight Hundred and eighty one (1881), by and between Sarah A. McEus widow of Elijah McEus Bertrude G. Vincent daughter of said Elijah, of the County of Jackson and Charles H. Vincent, husband and Bertrude, parties of the first part, and the grantees of Elijah McEus of Sarah A. McEus his wife and especially Margaret A. Davis, of the County of Jackson and State of Missouri, parties of the second part, WITNESSETH, That the said parties of the first part, in consideration of the sum of One dollar DOLLARS, to them paid by the said parties of the second part, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do by these Presents REMISE, RELEASE, and FOREVER QUIT-CLAIM unto the said parties of the second part the following described Lots, Tracts or Parcels of Land lying, being and situate in the County of Jackson, and State of Missouri, to wit: Lot one hundred and eighty nine (189) Block thirteen (13) McEus addition to the City of Kansas County of Jackson and State of Missouri as the same is marked and designated on the recorded plat of said Addition in the office of the Recorder of deeds for Jackson County State of Missouri, being the same lot heretofore conveyed by Elijah McEus of Sarah A. McEus his wife to Christiana Tonebohn by warranty deed dated 5th June 1857 and recorded on 11 August 1857 in Book 25 page 206 in the office of the recorder of deeds for Jackson County State of Missouri, and this deed being made in correction and perfection of the said deed last aforesaid in which the acknowledgement was imperfect as to the certificate of the official testifying acknowledgement and which was in other respects defective and being intended to convey to said parties of second part and especially Margaret A. Davis whatever interest the parties of the first part may have as heirs and widow of said Elijah McEus or otherwise in any manner whatsoever.

Christian and Caroline Tonebohn took out a Promissory Note to purchase Lot 188 and, apparently, purchase more of Lot 189 in Nov. 1857. This time it appears that there was promise to pay with 76 days of the signing of this document, no money exchanged.

Know all Men by these Presents: That we Christian -
Tonebohn and Caroline Tonebohn the wife of Christian
Tonebohn of McLees Addition to the City of Kansas in the
County of Jackson. in the State of Missouri in considera-
tion of Eight-Hundred and fifty Dollars to us paid by
Elijah Milton, McLee of the same place, the receipt of which
is hereby acknowledged, do sell and convey to the said
Elijah Milton, McLee, his heirs and assigns forever, all that
certain tract of Land situate lying and being in McLees
Addition to the City of Kansas, in the County of Jackson,
in the State of Missouri, and described as follows,
That is to say, Lots Number One Hundred and Eighty-
Eight, (188) and One Hundred and Eighty nine, (189) in
Block Number thirteen (13.) in McLees Addition to the
City of Kansas, in the County of Jackson, and State of
Missouri. To Have and To Hold the said premises:

I found no records yet to show this note was ever paid, which may have led to a series of legal actions against the Tonebohn's, beginning in May, 1858.

KANSAS CITY WEEKLY JOURNAL, MAY 1858

In this notification it was stated that Christian Tonebohn could not be summoned. Why could he not be summoned to the court? What was the nature of the litigation seeking exactly \$552.31?

and insurance added by W. H. CHICK & CO.

Order of Publication.

Alexander H. Ullershon, plaintiff, vs. Christian Tonebohn defendant, action in Lien, in the Kansas city court of common pleas, for Kaw Township, Jackson county, Mo.

NOW AT THIS DAY COMES THE PLAINTIFF, and it appearing to the satisfaction of the court that the defendant cannot be summoned, it is therefore ordered that he be notified that the plaintiff has filed herein his petition against him, the object and general nature of which, is to obtain judgment against him and against the property specified in said petition for the sum of five hundred and fifty-two dollars and thirty-one cents with interest and costs of suit, and unless he be and appear at the next term of his court, to be begun and holden at the court house, in the City of Kansas, on the 12th day of July, A. D., 1858, on or before the 6th day thereof, if he term so long continue, if not, then before the end of the term, judgment will be rendered against him, and his property sold to satisfy the same.

It is further ordered that this order be published in some weekly newspaper published in the county of Jackson, four weeks successfully, the last insertion to be at least four weeks before the commencement of the term at which the defendant is required to appear.

JNO. S. HOUGH, Clerk.

Attested, true copy. By Louis B. Scott, Deputy.
n3lw4 Rount & Claiborne attorneys for plaintiff.

In the spring of 1859, there was legal action taken to foreclose on Lot 189. The details were published in local newspapers for several months.

Here, we see that the plaintiff was the Grosskopf's. Again, it was stated that the Tonebohn's could not be summoned. The Grosskopf's were suing for failure to pay a Promissory Note of \$400 (plus interest) with a one year term.

KANSAS CITY JOURNAL, MAR. 1859

The Tonebohn's Lot 189 was foreclosed on in Dec. 1859 via Sheriff's Sale.

Order of Publication.
 John P. Knoche, Plaintiff, against Christian Tonebohn, Defendant. Civil Action to foreclose on Deed of Trust. In the Kansas City Court of Common Pleas, within and for the township of Kaw, county of Jackson and State of Missouri.
NOW AT THIS DAY COMES THE PLAINTIFF by his attorney, and it appearing to the satisfaction of the court, that the defendant, Christian Tonebohn, cannot be summoned in this action, it is ordered by the court that publication be made, notifying him that an action has been commenced against him by petition, in the Kansas City Court of Common Pleas, within and for the township of Kaw, county of Jackson and State of Missouri, founded on a negotiable promissory note executed by said defendant, for the sum of four hundred (\$400) dollars, dated Kansas, Mo., August the 9th, 1857, payable twelve months after date thereof, to the order of Plaintiff for value received, with ten per cent interest from the date thereof, and for the purpose of securing the payment of said note, said defendant and his wife executed and delivered to one Henry Grosskopf as Trustee a Deed of Trust, bearing date September 9th, A. D. 1857, conveying to said Trustee the following described Real Estate situate in the county of Jackson and State of Missouri, to wit: Lot number one hundred and eighty-nine, (189) in block number thirteen (13) in McGee's Addition to the city of Kansas, as marked, numbered and described on the plat of said Addition on record in the Recorder's office of the said county of Jackson upon conditions; to be void upon the payment of the aforesaid note and interest according to the tenor and effect thereof, otherwise to be in force. And unless he be and appear at the next term of this court, to be holden at the Court House, in the city of Kansas, Jackson county, Missouri, April, 1859, and on or before the end of the said term, rendered against him for the said note, with interest and costs of redemption of said defendant's Real Estate, he forego much thereof as may be required to pay off and discharge the judgment and proper. It is further ordered that this notice be published in some newspaper published in the city of Kansas for four weeks successively, at least four weeks before the next term of this court.

JOHN S. HOUGH, Clerk.
 for Plaintiff. v2n38d4w

MARSHAL'S SALE.
BY virtue and authority of a Special Execution issued from the office of the clerk of the Kansas City Court of Common Pleas, returnable to the December term, A. D. 1859, of said court, and directed to the Marshal of said court, and to the undersigned Marshal delivered. In favor of John Knoche, and against Christian Tonnebohn, I did, on the 18th day of October, A. D. 1859, levy upon and seize the following described Real Estate as the property of the said Christian Tonnebohn, situated in McGee's Addition to the city of Kansas in Kaw township, Jackson county, state of Missouri, to wit: Lot No. one hundred and eighty-nine, as marked and designated on the recorded plat of said Addition. I will on the 14th day of December, 1859, between the hours of nine o'clock in the forenoon, and five o'clock in the afternoon of that day, at the court house door and while said court is in session in the city of Kansas, county of Jackson, State of Missouri, sell at public auction, for cash, to the highest bidder, all the right, title, interest, claim, estate, and property of the above named Christian Tonnebohn, of, in, and to the above described property, to satisfy said execution and cost.

Nov18dtd JOHN G. HAYDEN, Marshal.

Summary, Questions and Comments:

In June, 1857, pioneering immigrants, Christian and Caroline Tonebohn, purchased a residential lot in the speculative McGee's Addition in, what was then, the town of Kansas, Missouri. The lot, then Missouri prairie, is now situated in the heart of downtown Kansas City, MO.

This is a significant discovery for Toeneboehn descendants. Christian and Caroline Tonebohn can now be said to be early pioneers and investors in Kansas City, MO.

In order to purchase a lot in McGee's Addition (\$400-\$500, initially) they had to have had surplus funds. Were they wealthy immigrants? If so, what was the nature of the wealth?

Were Christian and Caroline in residence at Kansas City, MO in the 1857 - 1859 timeframe? Or, were they in residence in St. Louis and simply speculating on the lots?

Were they considering building and or farming on Lot 188 and or Lot 189?

What happened to the Tonebohn's to cause the legal actions? Was Christian's death in 1859 or 1860 the cause?

Was the Mar., 1858 sale of the portion of Lot 189 used to purchase land in St. Louis?

None of these lots were mentioned in the 1896 will and subsequent probate proceedings of Caroline Kontz-Tonebohn.

Perhaps Caroline never knew about the Kansas City, MO lot purchases that included her name. Perhaps, following the death of Christian, she remarried, and the funds from the Lot 189 sale were part of her inheritance?

The name of Tonebohn can be found spelled at least 15 different ways. It seems like it's spelled, even in legal documents, phonetically with no accepted and fixed spelling preference. This anomaly makes it quite difficult to do research on this family.

References

"Jackson, Missouri, United States records," images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C391-WSBZ-V?view=fullText> : Nov 26, 2025), image 61 of 558; Jackson County (Missouri). Recorder of Deeds. Image Group Number: 008489735

"Jackson, Missouri, United States records," images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSRG-B4RY-H?view=fullText> : Nov 25, 2025), image 324 of 333; Jackson County (Missouri). Recorder of Deeds.
Image Group Number: 008312215

"Jackson, Missouri, United States records," images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3SM-8SMS?view=fullText> : Nov 28, 2025), image 475 of 666; Jackson County (Missouri). Recorder of Deeds.
Image Group Number: 008490007

The New Santa Fe Trailer Blog, Sep. 30, 2018, Diane Euston
[The McGees of Kansas City: A Pioneer Legacy](#)

History of Kansas City, Missouri; with illustrations and biographical sketches of some of its prominent men and pioneers, Case, Theodore Spencer, 1832-1900.

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