

From the Archives

Between World War I and World War II, THE place to go in Ladue for a fun casual meal (think Lester's & Sportsman's Park today) was the Dean Sister's Restaurant (#15 on the map). The restaurant, located at the termination of the Clayton 04 Trolley, was located at 9341 Clayton Road. This location is today at the western most part of the Ladue City Hall building that houses the Ladue Building Department.

The Dean sisters, Hazel and Ethel, came to St. Louis from Chicago with their mother in the late 1910's and opened for business in the Ladue area baking pies for people who would drive out in the country on Sunday afternoons. They then opened a restaurant in what had been a small frame farmhouse. The fixtures were rustic, including painted wooded stools and tables, with a parking lot providing spaces for automobiles. During the summer months, picnic tables were placed outside under trees. The restaurant quickly became a gathering place for high school age students and those arriving and departing from the Clayton 04 Trolley. The restaurant specialties were large ham sandwiches with onions, hamburgers and home-made apple pie with two scoops of ice cream.

In the late 1920's the Village of Ladue Trustees determined that the village needed a permanent city hall and fire station. The ideal property identified by the Trustees was the Dean Sister's Restaurant location at 9341 Clayton Road (the Ladue building was subsequently built and was formally dedicated in 1931). As a result, the restaurant relocated to the east, building a one-story frame building at the site of the present Ladue Police Department. Their business continued to prosper. On Labor Day in 1937 a national street car buff ended his 1,100 mile 32 day journey from Cleveland to St. Louis, terminating on the Clayton 04 Trolley at the Dean Sister's Restaurant. The story goes that he consumed 6 ham sandwiches, 2 pieces of apple pie with ice cream and 6 cups of coffee. At the end of the meal he declared that the meal made his journey all worthwhile!

By the late 1930's bus lines began to replace trolley lines. With the end of trolley service imminent and the Dean sisters ill and aging, (Hazel's sister, Ethel, died on September 22, 1941), Hazel made the decision to close the restaurant on December 14, 1941. The building was razed, and the property became, for many years, part of an informal Ladue city park.

