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HI Mailbag: North Meridian Street and Meridian Hills Boulevard

FIRE LAND PATENT MARJORIE JACKSON MERIDIAN HILLS
MERIDIAN HILLS BOULEVARD NORTH MERIDIAN STREET
STANDARD GROCERY STORES TRADERS POINT HUNT CLUB
CHARITY HORSE SHOW WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

Reader's Question:

On the northwest corner of North Meridian Street and Meridian Hills Boulevard, there is a wooded lot surrounded by a fence. There were maybe two buildings on an aerial photo from 1962, but a 1971 aerial photo showed the land to be vacant. I'd love to know who lived there and why the property remains vacant and fenced in to this day. ~ Becki H., Indianapolis

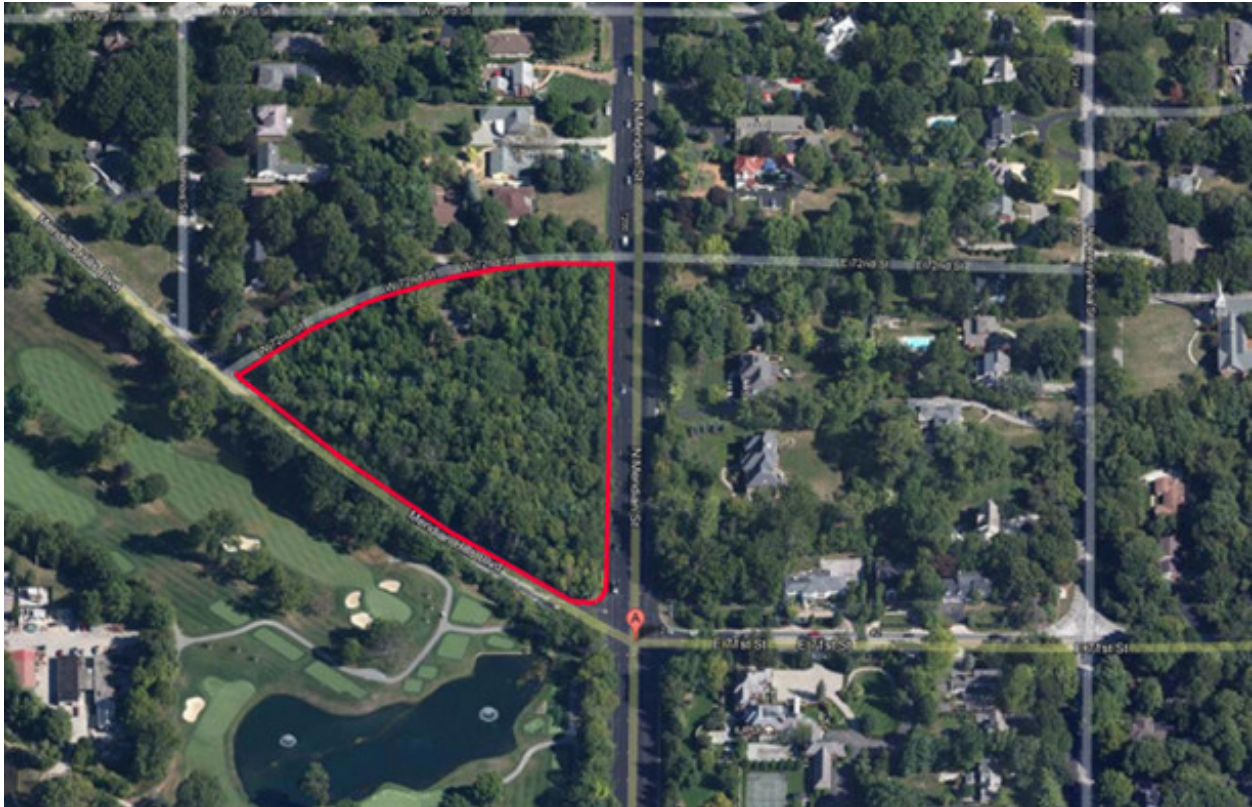
HI's Answer:

Every day, thousands of cars pass through the intersection where Meridian Street, Meridian Hills Boulevard, and 71st Street come together. The wooded property in the northwest quadrant of that corner has been an enigma to passersby for decades.



Heavily wooded property on the northwest corner of North Meridian Street, Meridian Hills Boulevard, and E. 71st Street (2013 photo by Sharon Butsch Freeland)

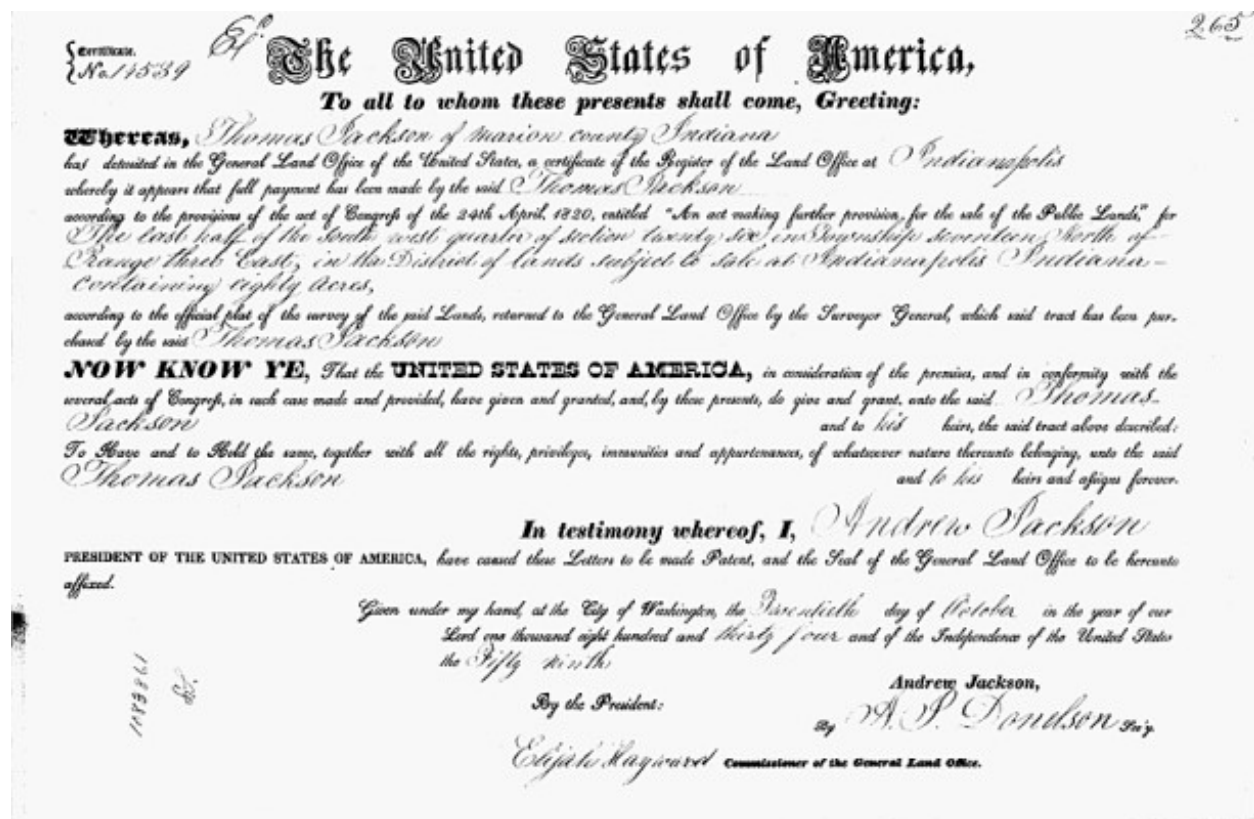
The land that's bounded by Meridian Street, Meridian Hills Boulevard, and West 72nd Street consists of about 3.6 acres. From an aerial view, the plot resembles a piece of pie. The property is just north of the golf course at the [Meridian Hills Country Club](#). At some point, the acreage was divided into nine separate parcels of approximately one-third of an acre each, suggesting that at one time someone had intended to develop this site into residential building lots.



From an aerial view, the acreage bounded by Meridian Hills Boulevard, Meridian St., and 72nd St. resembles a piece of pie (map courtesy of Bing)

My repeated attempts to contact the owner of the property over the past several weeks have not been successful. I had hoped to confirm the information I'd found on my own, as well as obtain additional details on the history of the site and any plans being contemplated for its future. Failing any first-hand accounts, I will tell you what I know.

The property was purchased from the federal government in 1834 by Thomas Jackson. By the time of the 1855 Marion County Atlas, the owner was listed as J. C. Mahan. On the 1889 Atlas of Indianapolis and Marion County, the owner was listed as John H. Ditman.



1834 Land Patent shows the purchase by Thomas Jackson from the U.S. of A. (Ancestry.com)

Because there are few records available for the areas of Marion County that were outside the city limits of Indianapolis until more recent times, I am not able to report who owned the property between 1889 and the 1930s. I can, however, provide information on the owners for the last three-quarters of a century, as members of the same family have continuously owned the property since then.



Fieldstone pillars are spaced at regular intervals around the perimeter of the property at Meridian and Meridian Hills Blvd. (2013 photo by Sharon Butsch Freeland)

By the time of the 1940 Census, a residence on the property was the home of three of the four adult children of Lafayette Andrew Jackson (1863-1931), the founder of the Standard Grocery Store chain. The residents included Jackson's daughter Charlotte and her husband, Carl Baldwin, and Jackson's sons, Chester and Howard. I feel certain the home was already built, when the Jackson family moved there in the 1930s, but at this time I do not know who built it.

Carl and Charlotte (Jackson) Baldwin continued to live in the property until their deaths in 1951 and 1959, respectively. Indianapolis city directories in the early 1960s listed “No Return” for 7102 N. Meridian Street, so the home may have been vacant or tenant-occupied for a time. Around 1962 or 1963, there was a fire on the property, presumably at the house in which the Jackson siblings had all formerly resided together. I searched newspapers of the period, but I was not able to find any information about the fire.



A fieldstone bridge over a gully on the property led to a single-family residence that once stood on this prominent corner (2013 photo by Sharon Butsch Freeland)

The property was then deeded to Charlotte Baldwin's nephew (and Lafayette A. Jackson's grandson), Edward J. Wiest. Edward's father, Edward H. Wiest, was the husband of Lafayette Jackson's fourth child, daughter Marguerite. Upon the death of the younger Edward Wiest, the property was then deeded to his sister, Elizabeth (Wiest) Johnson (Mrs. Sylvester Johnson III). She is the chairperson of the annual [Traders Point Hunt Charity Horse Show](#). In recent years, Mrs. Johnson has turned the property over to her son, John Johnson, who owns the [Meridian Hills](#) properties under the name Eagle Standard LLC.

As I could not reach the Johnsons, I do not know what their future plans for the property might be, if any. My sense is that they merely wish to keep the property in the family and maintain the land in as natural a state as possible for such a prominent corner. I'm sure the wildlife in the area enjoy having a haven on one of the main streets of the city.

Prime Meridian Hills site sold after nearly 5 years, with high-end houses on the way

June 27, 2023 | [Mickey Shuey](#)

KEYWORDS [LUXURY HOMES](#) / [RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE](#)



The 4.3-acre property is directly north of the Meridian Hills Country Club golf course and catercorner to the tony Arden neighborhood. (IBJ photo)

One of the last undeveloped sites in the ritzy town of Meridian Hills on the north side of Indianapolis has been acquired after nearly five years on the market.

The nine-parcel, largely wooded property at the northwest corner of Meridian Street and Meridian Hills Boulevard was purchased for an undisclosed price on June 20 by an Indianapolis-based holding company, which plans to develop several homes on the lots.

The 4.3-acre property is directly north of the Meridian Hills Country Club golf course and catercorner to the tony Arden neighborhood.

Meridian Pointe LLC, comprised of siblings Howard and Cathi Weiner, bought the land and expects to build at least four speculative homes on the westernmost lots of the property through a partnership with Carmel-based luxury home developer [Sigma Builders LLC](#). [Libby Somerville](#) and Steve Clifton with the Indianapolis office of Compass Realty will market those homes, each of which is expected to offer at least 4,000 square feet with asking prices well over \$500,000.

Howard Weiner, an Indianapolis native who now develops commercial properties in Chicago, declined to disclose the terms of the property acquisition when contacted by IBJ. The site [originally was listed for \\$1.9 million](#) in late 2018.

The purchase and subsequent plan to develop the property is “meant to execute what was originally planned over 30 years ago,” when the site was platted into 10 parcels, Weiner said. (One parcel has already been developed.)

The remaining five lots—all with frontage along Meridian Street—will be marketed for purchase through broker Mike Johnson with the Indianapolis

office of [Encore Sotheby's International Realty](#).

Weiner said some of the Meridian-facing lots could be combined to form larger properties for would-be buyers.

Many homes in the 1.7-square-mile Meridian Hills enclave are valued at more than \$1 million, and the median household income is \$164,167—triple that of Indianapolis as a whole.

Development of homes in Meridian Hills began about a century ago. The town incorporated in 1937 and today has about 1,800 residents and 715 homes, according to its website.

Weiner said work on the perimeter of the property—including preliminary work on a new walking path—will start July 5, with Sigma beginning work on the first of the speculative homes by October. He said there would be a concerted effort to preserve as many of the property's mature trees as possible, following consultation with an arborist.

Meridian Pointe LLC bought the property from Eagle Standard LLC, a holding company that had been owned by Elizabeth Johnson and immediate family members, including her son John Johnson. John Johnson, who managed the limited-liability company's assets on the family's behalf, died in 2021. Elizabeth Johnson died in 2022.

State records show Eagle Standard is now managed by Zionsville trust attorney Roger L. Burrus.

Bo Leffel, a land broker with the Indianapolis office of [Cushman & Wakefield](#), represented Eagle Standard on the sale. Chris Helft, a land broker with the Indianapolis office of Toronto-based [Avison Young](#), represented Meridian Pointe.