

Historical

EARLY BEGINNINGS

Photo One: Intersection of Vickery and Southwest Blvd in 1958 shortly after completion of the "Southwest Loop 217" interchange. – Loop 217 was renamed to Southwest Blvd in this area when I-820/I-20 was completed as the new southwest bypass. Ridglea Hills is located to the left. The Ridglea Country Club Estates subdivision is located on the right on the other side of the railroad tracks. Notice lack of trees except along Trinity Fork bottoms. **PHOTO TWO:** Another view of intersection. This additional view looking southeast shows the old barn that were recently demolished to make way for the attractive new Wal Mart "Neighborhood Pantry". Ridglea Hills is to the bottom of the photo. (Photos Courtesy Texas Freeway.com)



5360 Loop 217 at Texas and Pacific Railroad, Ft. Worth 1958



4597 Loop 217, Stove Foundry and Texas & Pacific RR



Western Hills Hotel

FUN FACTS

- Origin of “Ridglea.” – (English) Meadow near the ridge.
- The north part of Ridglea Hills Neighborhood is Camp Bowie.
- The south part of Ridglea Hills Neighborhood is W. Vickery but does not include the ancillary subdivision Hampton Place. (Ridge Acres Addition, Ridgewood Addition, Ridglea Crest.)
- The east part of Ridglea Addition includes the above “no neighborhood” group but stops at Como. We communicate with the ancillary subdivisions not included in Ridglea Hills Neighborhood along Westridge Plumb Valley and The Gardens of Westridge.
- The west part of Ridglea Hills Addition stops at Southwest Blvd. but the Neighborhood includes what appears to be Ridglea Hills South Addition also called Ridglea West Addition. The Neighborhood includes Oakwood Estates Apartments and two new small replats “Giverney” on Darcy Lane developed by Al Patel and Gary Cooper’s development on Ridglea Hills Court.
- Encompasses eight surveys, from the 1850 Allen Beard Survey to the 1889 Walter Houston Survey, the main part being included in the 1880 Albert Rusk Survey.
- C. Luther in the 1920’s bought three miles of pasture land along what later became Camp Bowie Blvd.
- A.C. Luther Realty Co. and Luther Bros. & Wilson Inc. A. C. Luther, “The Father of Ridglea”, his brother, J. T. Luther, Earl Wilson
- M. E. Berney, a partner in the Anderson-Berney Realty Co. in 1928, established the golf course in 1935
- The residential areas began to be platted in 1946. Luther Bros. and Wilson, Inc. began buying more land in the Ridglea Hills area.
- Early owners of the land in 1932, were Elizabeth Brants and Mrs. Olive Seybold.
- In 1952, the Luthers and Wilson dissolved the company. L.T. Luther and Wilson formed the Ridglea Construction Company
- A.C. Luther and Hank Green joined forces and built the Ridglea Country Club which opened in late 1954.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY

The Ridglea area, including Ridglea Hills and Ridglea West, lies approximately six miles west of Fort Worth's Central Business District. It encompasses eight surveys, from the 1850 Allen Beard Survey to the 1889 Walter Houston Survey, the main part being included in the 1880 Albert Rusk Survey. A. C. Luther came to Fort Worth from Tennessee in the 1920's and bought three miles of pasture land along what later became Camp Bowie Blvd., for \$400 an acre. His brother, J. T. Luther, credits him with being "The Father of Ridglea". J.T. left the University of Missouri to join his brother in Fort Worth, and with Earl Wilson, who arrived in 1945 after serving the Air Force, formed the A.C. Luther Realty Co. and Luther Bros. & Wilson Inc. M. E. Berney, a partner in the Anderson-Berney Realty Co. in 1928, established the golf course in 1935, making it a semi-public course. The fee charged for playing the 18 holes in 1938, was 50 cents. Other early owners of the land in 1932 were Elizabeth Brants and Mrs. Olive Seybold.

The residential areas began to be platted in 1946. Luther Bros. and Wilson, Inc. began buying more land in the Ridglea Hills area. A.C. Luther raised Angus cattle, grazing them on the land. As portions were sold

for residential lots, he moved the fences and continued to graze the cattle on the unsold empty lots. In 1952, the Luthers and Wilson dissolved the company. L.T. Luther and Wilson formed the Ridglea Construction Company. They began building high quality commercial buildings along the north side of Camp Bowie Blvd. The first tenant was Gordon Boswell Florist, who is still there. A popular gathering place in the 1950's was the Western Hills Hotel, which stood on the south side of the 6400 block of Camp Bowie Blvd. High School graduation parties around the pool and special drinks with orchids in the bar drew all ages. When I-30 was built and took much of the highway traffic away from Camp Bowie and Hwy. 80, the owner of the hotel, Hank Green, sold the Western Hills Hotel and built Green Oaks Inn where the main activity followed. Western Hills Hotel burned down in 1969.

A.C. Luther and Hank Green joined forces and built the Ridglea Country Club which opened in late 1954. One of the first events held at the club house was the wedding reception of Ted Klein and Wini Lyle in January 1955. When Wini's mother, Mrs. J. M. Lyle, called the club asking about arrangements, table cloths, dishes, etc., no one knew the answers since this was the club's first event. When the Ridglea Country Club was built, Luther thought it needed a wider boulevard leading to the front gates. To build this street, three houses which his company had built and sold earlier, had to be bought from the owners and torn down. Luther Lake is one of the focal points of the neighborhood. It is beautiful all year but becomes a real attraction during the Christmas season with the reflection of lights on the water. A.C. Luther was also instrumental in developing the Westover Hills and Crestwood neighborhoods.

W. E. Luther, Sr. had two brothers who became prominent Texans. Clayton and J. T. Luther moved to the Fort Worth area in the 1940s. Fort Worth was a small town at the time and Clayton engaged a partner and purchased 2,000 acres of prime property on the western edge of Fort Worth. They developed Ridglea subdivision in Fort Worth and began selling luxurious homes to oil field tycoons. Clayton was the real estate developer and J.T. functioned as the salesman. They were extremely successful and accumulated a vast amount of commercial real estate in Texas. President Lyndon Johnson and Governor John Connally called Clayton Luther a personal friend.

Much of the vacant land for Camp Bowie was "loaned" to the Army by patriotic citizens and enterprising land developers. After the war when the land was returned to them, the landowners inherited buildings, streets, utility lines and sewers and a head start on making the Arlington Heights area a dream area for rapid development as the finest part of town. This infrastructure, which included the best developed streetcar line, made west Fort Worth the silk stocking district of town. This persists even today where enclaves of the wealthiest citizens live on or near land once developed as a U.S. Army base named for the Alamo hero Jim Bowie.