

**Approximate boundaries:**

**N**-E. Pearson St. (partial); **S**-E. Kewaunee St. (partial);  
**E**-N. Farwell Ave; **W**-Milwaukee River

# LOWER EAST SIDE *Brady Street*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

The Brady Street neighborhood is the area on both sides of Brady Street from Farwell Avenue to the Milwaukee River. The street encompasses mostly businesses from Farwell to Humboldt Ave and a mix of businesses and residences west of Humboldt. Brady Street has rows of small commercial facades that have changed owners often over the decades but changed appearance little since the late 1800s. It is a street that attracts parades of pedestrians year round, and in the warm weather months, hundreds of sidewalk diners.

Brady Street Park is a relatively new development at the triangular intersection of Brady Street, North Water Street and Holton Avenue. See photos below.

## HISTORY

Brady Street is a neighborhood that has undergone multiple incarnations.

### Early populations

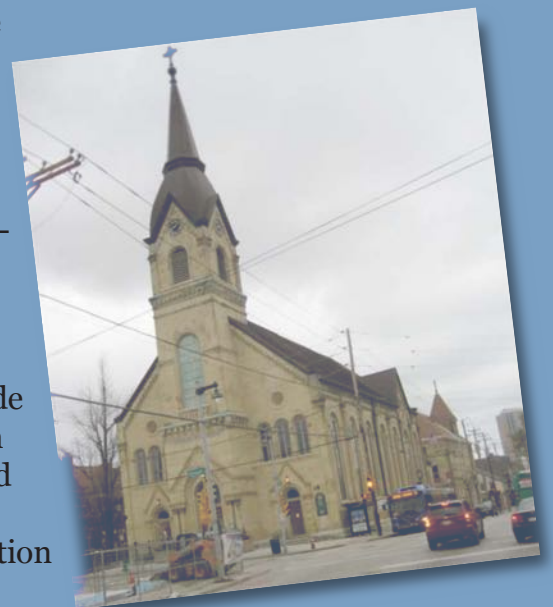
The subdivision that included Brady Street was originally platted by Chicagoans Hiram Pearson and Christopher Hubbard. The street was first given its name in 1838 and might have been named after George Brady, another Chicagoan.

### *The Polish incarnation*

Between 1850 and 1900 Brady Street and the Lower East side began to attract groups of residents, including wealthy grain traders, lawyers, merchants, and bankers from New England and New York. They built some of the grand Victorian mansions on Prospect Avenue. At the same time another population of Polish immigrants was erecting small cottages and a few two story homes along the Milwaukee River bluff just north of Brady Street. There is some evidence that Poles were living in that area as early as the 1850s. In 1854, a family of five Polish immigrants perished when their 12-foot by 12-foot shanty caught fire in an area that was somewhere between East Brady Street and the Milwaukee River. The fire department did not immediately respond because the officers initially thought the blaze was outside the city limits.

Most of the immigrant Poles who arrived early in the Brady Street area were Kashubes from the Baltic Sea area of Poland—many from the Hel Peninsula. Those interested in maintaining a fishing economy settled on Jones Island. Others were simply interested in gaining access to steady jobs—jobs that were plentiful in the area of the North Avenue dam, such as in tanneries, sawmills, and flour mills. They formed a dense settlement, erecting one to three houses on single lots and often raised chickens in their backyards.

In 1871 the immigrant Kashubes built their own anchor church, St. Hedwig's, on Franklin and Brady. Two years later they added a school, and when their congregation topped 600 families, they rebuilt their church at its present location on Humboldt and Brady (see photo). See a resident profile of one of the early Poles on the street below.



Today's neighborhood—Saint Hedwig's Church (Three Holy Women Parish)

## Brady Street resident profile (1920-1940s)

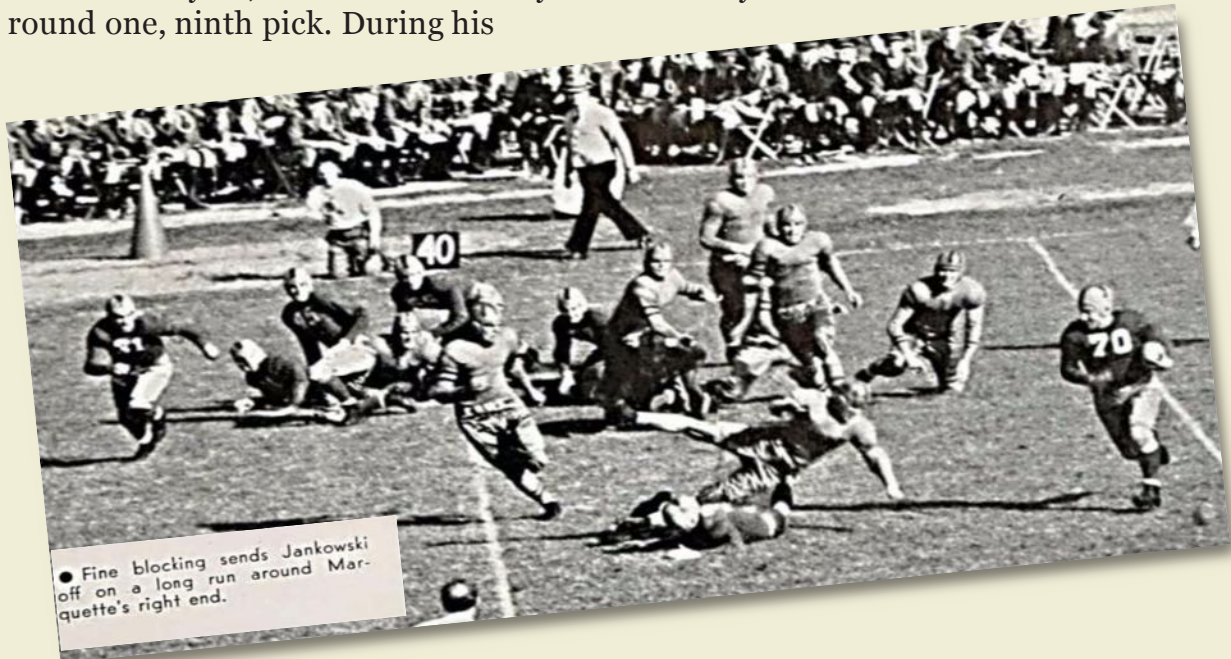
*(Information and photo from public records at Ancestry.com and other public records)*

### Packer Hall of Famer, Eddie Jankowski

Born in 1913, Eddie Jankowski grew up on Pulaski Street, near Brady. His parents, August and Anna Jankowski, were the children of immigrants from Poland (probably Kashubian). His father worked as a court clerk for the City of Milwaukee. The family no doubt worshipped at St. Hedwig's and may very well have raised chickens in their backyard. Eddie had six siblings.

Eddie had a talent for sports. He was active in athletics at East Division High School (later Riverside) where he served on the Athletic Council. He later played college football at the University of Wisconsin, where he was a member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity. At Wisconsin, he was referred to as "the most valuable" player on both offense and defense. *See action shot of him below carrying the ball from the Badger yearbook of 1937.*

That same year, Eddie was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in the first round one, ninth pick. During his



four years with the NFL Packers (1937-1941), Eddie starred at positions of fullback and halfback. In those days, players' pay was very low, even by Great Depression standards. Depending on the team, players might be paid by the game, and always kept a "day job." In the 1940 census, while at the height of his career, 26-year-old Eddie Jankowski was still living with his parents (now in Whitefish Bay), and reported working 52 weeks of the year as a salesman, earning an annual income of \$1,300 (about average for the times). Records suggest he may have been employed by the Miller Brewing Company.

During World War II, Eddie served as an officer in the US Navy. He eventually married Arlene M. Tiedeman and had at least one child. He became a coach for Whitefish Bay High School.

In 1982, Eddie Jankowski was inducted into the Green Bay Packer Hall of Fame. He died at age 83 in 1996 and was buried at Resurrection Cemetery in Madison.

### *The Irish incarnation*

Between the wealthy population near the lake and the immigrant Poles near the river was a mixed-class group of Germans, Yankees, and Irish. In the 1880s the Irish were migrating in to the Third Ward, their original Milwaukee home. Then tragedy struck the Third Ward Irish in 1892 and the Ward burned to the ground. This was Milwaukee's worst fire ever. Nearly all of the Irish cottages were lost. Scrambling to seek housing and jobs elsewhere, many Irish found new homes in the developing Merrill Park neighborhood, where many gained employment in the nearby railroad shops of the Milwaukee Road. But others came to the east side to access many of the same type of jobs that the Polish residents held.

As the Poles had built St. Hedwig's, the Irish established the Holy Rosary Parish on Oakland Avenue north of Brady as their anchor. The parish was built in 1885 in a blend of Queen Anne and Romanesque architectural styles. It also operated an elementary school from 1885 to 1982 which was guided by the BVM sisters.

### *The Italian incarnation*

As some of the Poles and Irish moved to other areas of Milwaukee, a group of Italians from Sicily began to settle in the Lower East Side. They set up delis and restaurants on and around Brady Street and founded St. Rita's Church, which would become their anchor. St. Rita's Church on Cass Street began in 1933 as a "mission" outpost of the Italian parish, the Blessed Virgin of Pompeii Church, in Milwaukee's Third Ward, where a larger number of Italians had settled.

The Italian incarnation lingered into the middle of the 20th century and remnants of its importance remain today. One of the long-standing Italian establishments has been Glorioso's Italian Market. The market was founded by three Gloriosa brothers, Joe (a returning World War II vet), Eddie, and Teddy in 1946. The three financed their endeavor with a \$1,000 loan that the boys' father, Felice, got from his boss. Joe did the ordering, Eddie handled deliveries, and young Teddy did maintenance. The boys had been raised in Milwaukee's old Third Ward. Felice, the father, had been a peddler and fisherman in Sicily and later worked on the Ward's Commission Row, buying and then selling produce from a pushcart.

Another venerable enterprise from the Italian era is Peter Sciortino's Bakery. Peter Sciortino had founded his bakery on the corner of Humboldt and Brady in 1948 (see photo). It was often manned by a group of siblings, Joe, Luigi, and Maria Vella. When Sciortino decided to retire, he offered to sell the business to the Vella siblings. Although they were barely out of their teens at the time, they jumped at the opportunity. The siblings worked hard over the years to build the wholesale business and expanded their deliveries to places such as Sendik's, Grascch Foods, Glorioso's, some Sentry and Piggly Wiggly stores, and later the Italian Community Center and the Bartolotta Restaurant Group.

Siblings were also involved in a third long-standing Italian establishment--Zaffiro's Pizza, just off Brady Street on Farwell. Liborio ("Bobby") Zaffiro and younger brother John, sons of Sicilian immigrants, grew up on Milwaukee's Lower East Side. In 1954, Bobby opened Zaffiro's Restaurant. Originally the restaurant had only a few tables and a service bar and then in 1970 Bobby acquired the barber shop next door to the restaurant, which provided space for a dining room and full bar. The specialty of the house was thin-crust pizza. The sauce for the pasta dishes



Today's neighborhood-  
Sciortino Bakery



was Bobby's wife Rose's family's recipe. Being the more extroverted sibling, Bobby manned the bar, while John Zaffiro made pizza for the restaurant, until his retirement in 1988. Bobby Zaffiro died the following year -- after which Bobby's wife, Rose, and two sons, Michael and Joseph, took over the business.

### Brady businesses

The following businesses were on Brady Street in 1950. See notes at the end of the chart.

<i>Addresses on E. Brady St. in 1950</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
811	Badger Paint Shop
815	French Quarter Tavern
819	DeBella Pizzeria
914	Vincent Galera Shoe Repair
928	Reid & Bundy Carpet Makers
932	Joe Bertucci Barber
1004	Frank G. Zapanc Tavern
1012	William C. Hamenick Gas Station
1016	Aladdin Studio Photographers
1017	Michael A. Sajdak Shoes
1018	Leo W. Conway Dentist
1020-22	Glorioso Brothers Groceries
1023	Joseph W. Foran Plumber
1024	John A. Seng Dentist
1026	United Radio Appliance Company
1027	LoMenzo Clothiers and Haberdashery
1101	Ignatius J. Sibrigordio Grocery
1200	Brady Cleaners
1201	People's Savings & Loan Association J. Jazdewski Real Estate and Insurance Company
1202	George F. Haack Sheet Metal Company
1205	El-Las Shop Women's Clothing Bob Bowers Men's Furnishing
1208	Brady Street Paint Store

<i>Addresses on E. Brady St. in 1950</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
1212	Forget-Me-Not Gift Studio
1213	Lukaszewicz Bakery
1216	Michael J. Stankiewicz Tavern
1219	Frank J. Jazdzewski Funeral Director
1221	Cornell's Meat Market
1224	Cerolo & Busateri Real Estate
1225	Harvey's Apparel
1228	Michael F. Donahue Dentist Joseph J. Ziino Lawyer Brady Realty
1229	August F. Schmeling Variety Store
1233	Lerner Fruit Market
1234	A & P Food Store
1240	Louis Beauty Salon
1241	Davidson & Son Grocery
1301	Thompkins Ice Cream
1305	Hansen Jewelry
1307	Esther's Lunch
1316	East Side Fur Shop (Roman Orcholski)
1317	Evelyn's Beauty Salon
1322	Martin Larson Shoe Repair
1329	Frank J. Listwan Tavern
1332-36	Short Stop Inn
1338	Hacker's Cash Meat Market
1344	J & S Fruit Market
1348	Hanson Coal Co.
1404	Mrs. Neta Carroll Tavern
1407	The Lakeside Dye Works
1418	Dairy Lane Garage
1419	Heiligenthal Hardware Store
1433	Hank's Coffee Shop
1434	Fancien Beaute Salon

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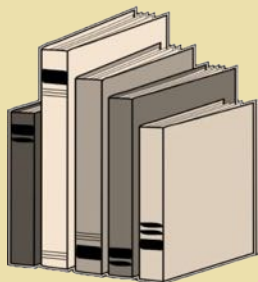
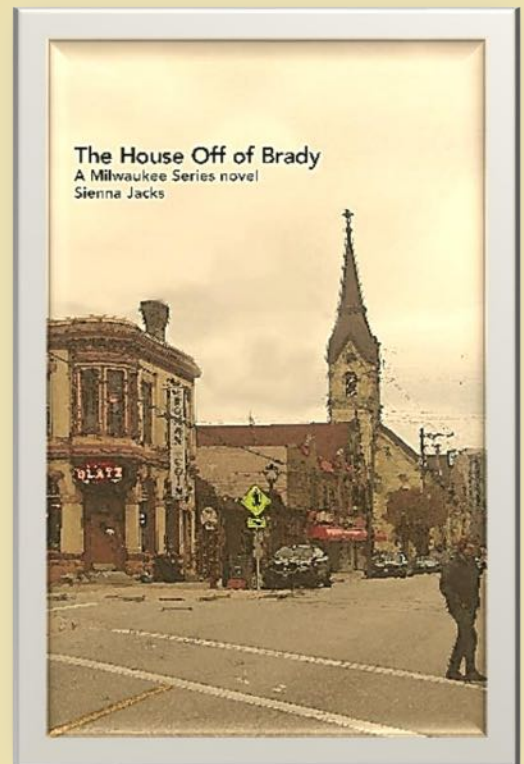
*Introducing*  
**The Milwaukee Series**  
Novels that educate readers on Milwaukee neighborhoods

This series, written by mystery novelist Sienna Jacks takes place in historic neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

*The House Off of Brady*

Illuminating the histories of the Third Ward and Brady Street

Two young anthropologists, trying to convince a local nonprofit to sponsor a neighborhood house museum, must show that the historical occupants of the house were representative of Milwaukee's Brady Street, and that they project positive images for the neighborhood. Their efforts are boosted by a personal journal left behind by one of the home's occupants—Giuseppe Russo. But as the young anthropologists translate and transcribe the journal, they learn that Giuseppe had been banished from his former community in the Third Ward. Are they about to stumble on information that could kill the project—or something perhaps even worse?



**MECAH Publishing**

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*All of the author's royalties go to supporting neighborhood museums and exhibits in Milwaukee, when book is purchased through the publisher*

<i>Addresses on E. Brady St. in 1950</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
1437	Anthony J. Sanfelippo Physician
1450	Smith Drug Store
1516	Harry V. Nelson Popcorn Samuel Skonlnick Painter

**Notes from census and other public records:**

- As in most Milwaukee business corridors, most of the proprietors were immigrants and very few had educations beyond 8th grade.

The Italian presence was very strong on Brady in 1950—particularly on the western half of the street.

- Vincent Galera, the shoe repairman, was an Italian immigrant who lived at the same address as his shop.
- Vincent DeBella with the pizzeria was an Italian immigrant who lived on Lyon Street.
- Joe Bertucci, the barber, was also an Italian immigrant who lived on Arlington Place.
- Ignatius Sibrigordio, the grocer, was another Italian living on Arlington Place.
- Anthony Sanfelippo, the doctor, was an Italian raised in Shorewood. His father was an Italian immigrant.

The Poles still had a presence on Brady in 1950—particularly on the eastern half of the street.

- Michael Sajdak, with the shoe store, was born in Poland.
- Michael Stankiewicz was the son of a Polish/Russian immigrant who lived on Franklin.

*The countercultural incarnation*

By the 1960s, Brady Street was less known for its ethnic contributions, and was heading in a new direction. In the late 1960s, the street was becoming a haven for artists and antique dealers. By the early 1970s it had become the center of the countercultural movement in Milwaukee, with head shops and book stores replacing many of the ethnic establishments. Head shop staff would brag about visits by sports celebrities and the times they would lead them to remote areas of the building to smoke weed. Shops selling beads, candles, incense, and sandals proliferated—sometimes interspersed with small antique stores.

Businesses on Brady. The following businesses were on East Brady Street in 1970. See notes at the end of the chart.

<i>Addresses on E. Brady St. in 1970</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
534	Penny-wise Care Wash
615	Queens-Way Coin Operated Dry Cleaner
726	Joseph Campioni Bakery & Delicatessen

<i>Addresses on E. Brady St. in 1970</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
728	Beyond the Sea Restaurant
815	Sunny Italy Tavern
816	Barbara's Beauty Salon
818	Pizza Jack
819	Mario Pizza
829	Sinagra's Grocery
915	Colla's Fish Market
918	Steven J. Balistreri Accountant
928	Milwaukee Vacuum Cleaner
932	Sew-What Dressmaker*
1004	Regano's Roman Coin Tavern
1010	Gloriosa's Italian Villa Restaurant
1011	Roa's Films
1016	La Petite Dog Grooming
1017	Edward Sajdak's Shoe Store
1018	Leo Conway Dentist
1020	Gloriosa Brothers Grocer
1023	Joseph H. Wichman Plumber
1027	Lo Menzo Cleaning (Lorenzo)
1101	Peter Sciortino Bakery
1117	Vnuk's House of Antiques
1200	His & Her's Antique Gallery
1204	Discontinuity Shop Used Merchandise
1205	Rehabilitation Services
1208	The Silver Shop
1209	B J Antiques
1216	Mike's Café
1219	John L. Hoft Art Studio



<i>Addresses on E. Brady St. in 1970</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
1220	John I. Suminski & Sons Funeral Home
1221	Lesch's Ready-to-Wear Women's Clothing
1224	Busateri's Bookkeeping Services
1225	Brady Street Laundromat
1229	A F Schmeling Company Variety Store
1230	George Webb Hamburger Parlor
1232	Cavalier Antiques East Side Art Gallery
1233	Patti Lerner Fruit Market
1234	A & P Grocery Store
1240	Brounlee Jeweler
1241	Easttown Super Liquor Store
1301	Second Chance Gardner & Company Clothing
1305	Peter's Barber Shop
1307	M & C Diner
1311	Ehlert's Tavern
1315	Lee My Look
1316	The Leather Shop
1318	Precise Cleaner's Gift Shop
1327	Pretty Parlour Salon of Beauty
1329	Raymond Listwar's Bar
1338	Modiste Dressmaker
1339	Frank Tomasello's Club
1344	Updown Body Shop & Repair
1348	L. Warp Wocf Shop Fabrics
1401	Sylvestor Nolde's Tavern
1407	Aldeman Laundry
1413	Prints of the Fishy Whale Art Gallery
1419	Age C. Roland Poska
1433	The Lunch Box
1434	Shir-vons Beaute Salon

<i>Addresses on E. Brady St. in 1970</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
1436	Jerry's Barber Shop
1440	Breakfast Club Restaurant
1450	Smith Pharmacy

### Notes from census and other public records:

- Sew-What Dressmaker at 932 E. Brady would close at the end of the year and be replaced by Joynt Venture Pipe Shop, the first head shop on the street. The head shop would also have the address of 1701 N. Astor beginning in 1972.
- In 1970 there were five antique shops and three art galleries on Brady.
- There were five laundries or dry cleaners.
- There were four taverns and one liquor store on Brady in 1970.
- Both the Italians and the Poles still had a presence on the street in 1970 with establishments such as Joseph Campioni Bakery & Delicatessen, Mario Pizza, Pizza Jack, Sunny Italy Tavern, Steven J. Balistreri Accountant, Gloriosa's Restaurant, Gloriosa Brother's Market, Regano's Roman Coin Tavern, Sciortino's Bakery, Busateri's Bookkeeping, Frank Tomasella's Club, Edward Sajdak's Shoe Store, Suminski Funeral Home, Roland Poska, and more.

In the early 1970s a small housing commune of hippies developed just off Brady Street. Commune practices stressed an ironic mix of natural childbirth, drug use, and natural foods. Because most residents came in as couples—some with kids--free sex never became a regular practice there.

### *The yuppie incarnation*

The hippies of Brady Street gradually moved across the Milwaukee River into the Riverwest neighborhood where the rents were cheaper. Brady Street lost its countercultural identity by the late 1970s and gradually declined throughout the decade of the 80s. Oneida Antonio Doxtator recalls the state of the neighborhood during this period (see below).

## Former Brady Street resident recalls life on Brady in the 1980s

By Antonio Doxtator

The lower East Side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the mid-1980s to early 1990s, was a working class area. There were many Italian businesses including Glorioso's Grocery and Deli, Sciortino's Bakery, Cataldo's Restaurant, Jo Cat's Pub, Scaffidi's Hideout, and a few others.

There were lots of bars, one on each corner on almost both sides of the street, and aggressive panhandlers worked most corners asking for change from afternoon to night.

Brady Street was lively especially on the weekends as a melting pot of different groups. I lived on Franklin Place. On the corner was a fire station and opposite corner was a Greek family restaurant called "The Island," which later became "Cempazuchi" an upscale Mexican restaurant. The block was as diverse as the people who lived there and visited, with its various ethnic restaurants including Emperor of China for Chinese food.

Next to the fire station was a bar called "Franklin Place," which is now "Hosed on Brady," and down the block was a closed-down Milwaukee Boy's Club, that closed in 1982 and it later became the Jesus Soul Saving Traveling Apostolic Church. Across the street from the firehouse was Saint Hedwig's Church, which is now part of the Three Holy Women Catholic Church, which merged in 2000, and across from there on the other corner was The Bike Shop, which later became Brady Street Futons. The "Up and Under" bar was located down the block, next to the Suminski Funeral home, which is no longer there.

The racial composition of the area was overwhelmingly Caucasian but it also had a small minority population of African American, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Middle Eastern, and American Indian. The children in the neighborhood spent most of their time outside, and hung out on their porches and in their back yards. They also played baseball, and basketball at Pulaski Park or Cass Street School playground. Kids played football in the street or in the parks, or they could wake up early and go fishing at the lagoon or on the lake, and also swimming at the beach or exploring around the bike trails was a common pastime.

The majority of local youth attended Cass Street School for their public school education. It went from Kindergarten to 8th Grade. At Cass, The majority of the students were also Caucasian and African American, but it was also diverse. Many of the Italian and middle class youth attended St. Rita's Catholic School next to Cass. In the late '80's Cass Street school could be a rough place at times, and fights and bullying were common.

Between Humboldt and Farwell along Brady street, within those four blocks there were two liquor stores, within two blocks of each other, and there was at least four bars.

There was a high-rise building on Arlington and many drug and alcohol-dependent men lived there, also the Peck Row House on Farwell was a rooming house that housed up to 70 single men, and many were drug and/or alcohol addicted and pan-handled in the area.

There was often a different pan-handler on each block, and on Brady there were houses where you often seen intoxicated men passed out on the front yard or stairs. At the bridge going down to the lake at the end of Brady you would see homeless men living and sleeping under there. Often they would be intoxicated or fighting. The bike trail below the bridge could be a dangerous place if you were alone or at night. Public drinking and fights on the street were common, especially on the weekends. This was not the same Brady Street you see today since most buildings on Brady were burnt out or abandoned with lots overgrown with weeds.

Having lost most of its strong ethnic enclaves, the three anchor churches (Hedwig's, Holy Rosary, and St. Rita's) consolidated as one church on July 1, 2000. The new parish was incorporated as Three Holy Women.

But Brady Street was about to claim a new identity—that of a young professional or yuppie destination. In 1989, respected Italian chef Girolama "Mimma" Megna decided to take a chance on Brady Street and opened her very fashionable Mimma's Café. Within months, sports celebrities could be observed at window-side tables--this time engaging in the more respectable and certainly legal practice of upscale dining.

Mimma was the pioneer for the new Brady Street identity, and soon other upmarket proprietors followed. Throughout the 1990s new boutiques, condos, clubs, and restaurants opened on the street. Rents and housing values soared. A driver passing through Brady Street on a summer evening would see hundreds of young, chicly-dressed professionals dining and drinking at sidewalk tables.

## Current populations (as of 2021)

Brady Street's population has grown rapidly since year 2000. Over 8 in 10 residents today are European Americans, with Poles still dominating membership at St. Hedwig's Church (now a component of Three Holy Women). Italian food can still be purchased up and down Brady Street.

Brady Street overall is an overly educated neighborhood where just under half the residents over 25 have earned bachelor's or graduate degrees. Over 8 in 10 hold some kind of white collar job, as opposed to blue collar. The median income per household is just under \$40,000, with a mix of low income (many of these student households) and middle to upper middle income households.

Rents are relatively high for Milwaukee, with two-bedroom apartments averaging just under \$900 a month. Housing values continue to rise.

While there is no indication that Brady Street is moving away from its yuppie incarnation, one thing has changed. Girolama "Mimma" Megna, the woman who opened Mimma's Cafe — the Italian restaurant that brought destination dining to Brady Street—closed her restaurant on New Year's Day in 2017. She claimed she was tired of cooking for the past 60 years and needed to retire.

Brady Street has an active business improvement district. The New Brady Street Area Association (BSAA) was formed in 1988. Comprised of area residents and merchants, the association is active in area events and development.



Today's neighborhood-  
Brady St. in the summer

## RECURRING NEARBY OUTINGS (Health conditions permitting)

- **Hi Hat and Garage** at 1701 W. Arlington Pl., a stylish and upscale bar with signature cocktails (see photo).
- **Glorioso's Italian Market** at 1011 E. Brady St. (see above for history)
- **Emperor of China** at 1010 E. Brady St., a long-standing Chinese restaurant.
- **Brady Street Business Improvement District** at 1224 E. Brady St., an organization committed to business development on the street.
- **Milwaukee beer line trail** along the side of the bluff between Brady St. and Humboldt, crossing the Milwaukee River on the Marsupial bridge under the Holton St. bridge.

## RECURRING NEARBY OUTINGS

In the following section the website addresses have been eliminated due to technical problems with the various ways different web browsers display PDF files. Website information on these events is available through the book *Milwaukee Area Outings on the Cheap*. See below.

BRADY ST. FESTIVAL			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul., Sat. 11am-12am	Brady St.	Music, food, arts, crafts.	Free

BRADY STREET PET PARADE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
October	Brady St.	Brady Street Pet Parade.	Free

### JEWISH MUSEUM OF MILWAUKEE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mon.-Thu 10am-4pm; Fri. 10am-2pm, Sun. 12-4pm	1360 N. Prospect Ave.	Dedicated to preserving and presenting the history of the Jewish people in southeastern Wisconsin and celebrating the continuum of Jewish heritage and culture.	See website

### FESTIVUS ON BRADY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Dec., Sat. 9:30pm-1:30am.	Brady St.	Opportunity to air grievances and participate in feats of strength to win Festivus pole, per Festivus Seinfeld episode in 1997.	Free

### WALKING TOUR—BRADY STREET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late May-mid Oct. Sat.'s 1:30pm	Meets in front of Three Holy Women Catholic Parish (St. Hedwig Church) at 1702 N. Humboldt Ave.	Tour through the neighborhood on a half-mile stroll and learn about the area's Polish and Italian roots, the counter culture of the '60s and '70s and the area's recent urban renaissance.	unk

### CHARLES ALLIS ART MUSEUM

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Wed. thru Sun. 1-5pm	1801 N. Prospect Ave.	Self-guided tour of Tudor-style mansion of entrepreneur Charles Allis designed by Milwaukee architect Alexander Eschweiler in early 20th century	unk

### MOVIE TIME AT THE CHARLES ALLIS MUSEUM

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Select Weds. 7:30pm	1801 N. Prospect Ave.	Classic films from the 30s and 40s from rare collection of Milwaukee film historian Dale Kuntz	unk

### MILWAUKEE MUSLIM FILM FESTIVAL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Mar. thru late Apr.	Milwaukee Art Museum, 700 N. Art Museum Drive; Oriental Theater, 2230 N. Farwell Ave.; Student Union (2nd Fl.), 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd.	Films that explore topics that are timely, relevant, and generate meaningful discussion about Muslims and the Muslim world.	unk



## THE GREEN GALLERY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Wed.-Sat. 2-6pm	1500 N. Farwell Ave.	Permanent and temporary art exhibits.	Free to look

## LOW COST MOVIES: ORIENTAL THEATER

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Sat., Sun. early show	2230 N. Farwell Ave.	A Landmark arthouse theater.	unk

These outings are provided courtesy of MECAH Publishing. To access the book that provides nearly 600 outings—all priced under \$10—for the entire Greater Milwaukee area, go to <http://mecahmilwaukee.com/NonFiction.html>

## QUOTES FROM RESIDENTS

### **Quotes from an oral history of the Lower East Side/Brady Street currently being conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.<sup>1</sup> About THEN.**

“Because I grew up on Brady Street, my earliest memories of the houses were what you called mixed use. The merchants—butcher, baker, candlestick maker—the people that ran those stores lived above them. I grew up thinking everybody had a store down below. We were the local funeral home and we grew up above the funeral home. The other houses in the neighborhood were single family homes, duplexes, or what you call the mother-in-law home—where you either added a house in back or you raised your house and added another level in what they call the Polish flat.”

“Brady Street in the ‘70s and into the ‘80s was really Milwaukee’s Haight-Ashbury. And that’s where the Brady Street Festival came from and it was Milwaukee’s first real blow-out festival. And it was the first to be closed down by its neighbors, because they said, ‘this is too much.’ It was too much drinking, too much drugs, too many people getting sick on people’s doorsteps, passing out in people’s backyards. And it was the neighbors that closed it down and it was a real fight between the neighbors and the merchants.”

“Well, Brady went through a few stages. When I first moved to the area you had mostly Polish and Italians there and a lot of antique shops. I think this is when the neighborhood began to go downhill. By the late 1960s and especially into the 1970s the hippies began to move in. My brother lived on Warren, just off of Brady. He worked in one of the head shops. I would have to say that during that time a lot of east side streets began to look run down-dirty, sloppy upkeep. Then you had the time in the late 1980s where Brady began to make improvements. I recall walking down Brady in, perhaps 1988 or 1989 shopping for a bicycle. I saw this new restaurant—Mimma’s. My friend and I stopped in there and had a helping of gelato. The waiter told us that things were really changing on the street and to look for more. He was so right.”

“The epicenter of Brady used to be in the center, around Humboldt. But I remember when the Nomad got built, the High Hat, then that became the epicenter kind of on the east end. At night now you’ll see the east end of Brady more crowded.”

“When I first moved in, the predominant stores were resale shops. And bars. Mimma’s was the first nice restaurant on the street. So others saw her success and other people started changing. The bakery became nicer. Retail came in. There was a time before the 2008/2009 recession where it was flourishing. Retail went out in 2008/2009. Now I’m glad to say we’re still a strong restaurant area. When bad times hit, you lose retail first. Brady was always known for its bars. But neighbors worked very hard to say, ‘You can’t have a bar if you don’t have food too.’ We’ve been very much directed by the neighborhood organizations—the BID and the Brady Street Area Association.”

“The Poles were very frugal. The housing stock was literally recycled from the other side of the river. We reused a lot of stuff. If you walk from different areas you would see houses built by people who owned some of the tanneries and breweries. So that’s what made it unique—the owners living next door to the workers.”

“Well, the Irish that lived on Brady did have the laying on of hands traditions for the sick—I think some even had exorcisms. The Poles had the blessing of the Easter baskets. The Italians had their processions. They still have these processions now and then between St. Hedwig’s and St. Rita’s.”

“I had this grocery store truck pull up and park right in front of my house and beep his horn three times and people would come out and buy from him. And that was just the old Brady Street thing. There had been two or three of them, but then it was just down to Peter. And he was wonderful. I’d send my kids out to tell him what I wanted and I always got my change back. He would get up at three or four in the morning and drive down three times a week, and then it got to be twice a week and then once a week. He would drive down to Chicago’s Commission Row and drive up with the freshest vegetables you could get in the city. He was a fixture. Everyone knew him and he knew everybody. He carried almost everything, including information.”

“Years ago they had this activity on Brady with trained pigeons. They would drop their pigeons someplace and whatever pigeons returned first won the bet.”

“Both the Polish and the Italians had very large families with 6 to 12 children. Where you see families nowadays it’s mostly 1 to 3 children.”

“I think also the public arts project along the sidewalks in the tree border. It was the whole process of bringing people together again and finding out people’s memories and what went on in the different stores. This was something that started reknitting the neighborhood back together again, because people would hear other people’s stories and then they would remember something. The whole thing is a pictorial exhibit of the past. It brought people together again. And now, when you walk it, it actually tells you stories about what happened at various places.”

“Well it changed a lot. I was a part of a group that got together and created the BID, the Business Improvement District. And once the City granted us that status and we started fixing up Brady Street itself, and that spread. Lots of people started fixing up their houses. And I, for instance, started fixing up my house, two or three people on the block and side streets started fixing up their houses. So gradually over the last 40 years it’s really changed significantly.”

“Often we had large or extended families, with grandma, aunts and uncles. My father said it was nothing back then to have 6 to 8 children or 8 to 12 children in a family. . . I remember a case where two brothers married two sisters and lived near each other and each had six children.”

“The towers—the low income housing. One of the reasons we have so many is that the area had become rundown and poor, and they could get the land easily. But also the people didn’t have the clout to object. Today you’d never be able to build low income housing here. But what hap

pened was when the Feds changed the rules about who could live in there. It wasn't just the elderly, which was what it was built for. They then let in all SSI people, and that included people who had drug and alcohol dependencies. And suddenly these towers were flooded with people with alcohol and drug problems. And that's what really drove people out and closed a lot of the stores. It was changing times anyway, but then the neighborhood was absolutely flooded and nobody knew how to control it. So the elderly began to move out of their places because they did not feel safe in their own place. So that's really the issue. It was John Norquist who went to Washington and said, 'You have to change these rules; we cannot run these places like this.' They were then allowed to do a kind of policing there and started a two-strike-and-you're-out-rule and that took a huge burden off of the neighborhood."

"As children, we pretty much stayed in the neighborhood, playing hide and seek, roller skating, or going to the playgrounds. Back then, the playgrounds had summer programs for kids in the area . . . At one time there was a Boys Club in the area, so a lot of the boys attended the Boys Club. A lot of those programs went by the wayside as the demographics of the neighborhood changed, and there were fewer and fewer kids."

"In my earliest memories, the church leaders were most important. The priests."

"We had three distinct Catholic churches there, based on ethnicity. When the new priest came in—Father Tim—he was so wonderful and kind and really grew his parish. They had brought him in to close down two of the three churches and combine them into one church, but he filled them all back out again. So he got it renamed "The Three Holy Women" so it was again the Polish, the Italian, and the Irish."

"Yeah, making Brady Street historic, which I think goes back to the '70s or the '80s was important. There was also the freeway that did destroy some areas—the area on Ogden, which is several blocks away. And the freeway never got built. And the freeway that destroyed the little pink church that hurt the Italians here. Brady proper has been mostly protected by the historic designation."

### **Quotes from an oral history of the Lower East Side/Brady Street currently being conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.<sup>1</sup> About NOW.**

"People recognize they are welcome here. They say this. Last night I was doing some yard work. A young man asked if he could park his car there while he moved in, and he said 'It's so nice to be back on the East Side where I feel welcome.' This was a young Black man."

"Let me give you an example. The pet blessing. It's always in October. They have a pet parade. They end up at the porch at St. Rita's. Last October, I probably had 1,000 dogs in front of me. I had this fellow come up and say, 'I'm an atheist, Father, but would you bless my dog.' I don't see people in this neighborhood as being adverse to religion. And they seem to love the symbol of Catholicism."

"The Italians have their Saints parade and they'd have people as far away as Chicago come and bring their saints with them. The parade went right by my house. I remember waking up and thinking, 'This is wonderful.' And they had bands and the kids would go along, and put money on the drapes of the saints. The floats were very heavy and it took a lot of men to carry those things. It was really wonderful to watch."

"I think by starting the BID and the impact we had, a lot of other neighborhoods came over to see it and then decided to do it too. The Brady Street neighborhood was really the poster child for quite a while. And other people said, 'Well if they can do it, we can too.' Because we were about as low as you can get. People were afraid to come here. We were all volunteers then."

“Brady Street has always been rich with shops and restaurants and I’ve seen them change over time. But what I’ve seen change is the number of people coming in. So on a Friday night now, it’s just jammed. And it’s a living neighborhood. . . A statistic I use is this. When I came here you had the three parishes, and between all of them, you had four weddings a year. This year I had 65.”

“Especially 10 years ago, you’d look at who was attending these churches, and it was mostly the older residents and the children of immigrants—the Polish and the Italian. A lot of these went to the suburbs where they could be among the people who had once oppressed them. When they were here they were Polish or Italians. When they went there they became white. You might want to paraphrase this a little. I’m glad you had the confidentiality form to sign. Today you have the grandchildren of some of these white flight ancestors—or maybe they aren’t even connected. And some of these left the suburbs and are living here. They are saying, ‘Why do I want to live at the end of a cul de sac and have to drive 10 miles to get a gallon of milk?’ So a lot of them move here or to downtown and a lot of them go to church here. So you’re getting a lot of the neighborhood people in the churches again.”

“[The new residents] now like to gain experience rather than acquiring stuff. They travel a lot more. We rent out parking spaces to people and often they go overseas and to other states. They are very mobile.”

“There seems to be a resurgence of the Catholic tradition here, and that seems to be due to the pastor that has been here for 17 or 18 years. It could also be that the churches have consolidated. What used to be three churches is now one church. There are new members and a new interest in church, particularly after 9/11. And there are the Italians who continue to come back to church.”

“It’s important for the Italian/Sicilians—even those who have moved from the Third Ward to Brookfield, Oconomowoc, all over—to still see their Italian heritage here.”

“There are two groups in the Brady area and they work well together. One is the Brady Street Area Association and the other is the Business Improvement District. The Brady Street Area Association is comprised of residents and businesses. The association was formed in the late 1980s when the residents were concerned that the reforming merchants group was going to reestablish the Brady Street festivals. The Brady Street festival now is very different from the Brady Street festival that ran in the mid-1970s to the late 1980s. The residents were very concerned that was going to start up again. So they got together and merchants were also part of the group so they worked together to make this better. It took about 10 years before they even started doing the festival again. The political clout comes from both groups—the residents as well as the businesses. The Business Improvement District is self-taxed and has more dollars and is interested in safety, security, maintaining the streetscape. And the residents are part of safety, making sure the wrong element does not come into the neighborhood. The reason that they are successful is that the residents and the businesses realize that you can’t have one without the other. The businesses appreciate those residents that stuck with the neighborhood, from the time when it went down to the time when it came back up, and they recognize that having residents committed to the neighborhood are just as important as businesses who are committed, so they both have clout. Back in the day the residents were saying, ‘We don’t want to have all these bars. We don’t want to have all these liquor licenses.’ There could have been more than there currently is, but the neighborhood say, ‘We don’t want that.’ So they’ve got a little clout. They have to go through the Brady Street Area Association to come in. And we work closely with the alderman.”

“One thing I’ve noticed is that a lot of these new people came here because they remember when grandma or grandpa would take them on an excursion down to Brady Street. Their aunts or uncles lived in the neighborhood and they remember coming to visit them. Or they went to college and they remember coming here for the festivals, so they come back here.”



“We like processions and what we are trying to do now is invigorate that sense of church that is not just within the walls of a church but a church that walks with people.”

“We have been able to reinvent ourselves several times. And that’s what makes this such a great neighborhood.”

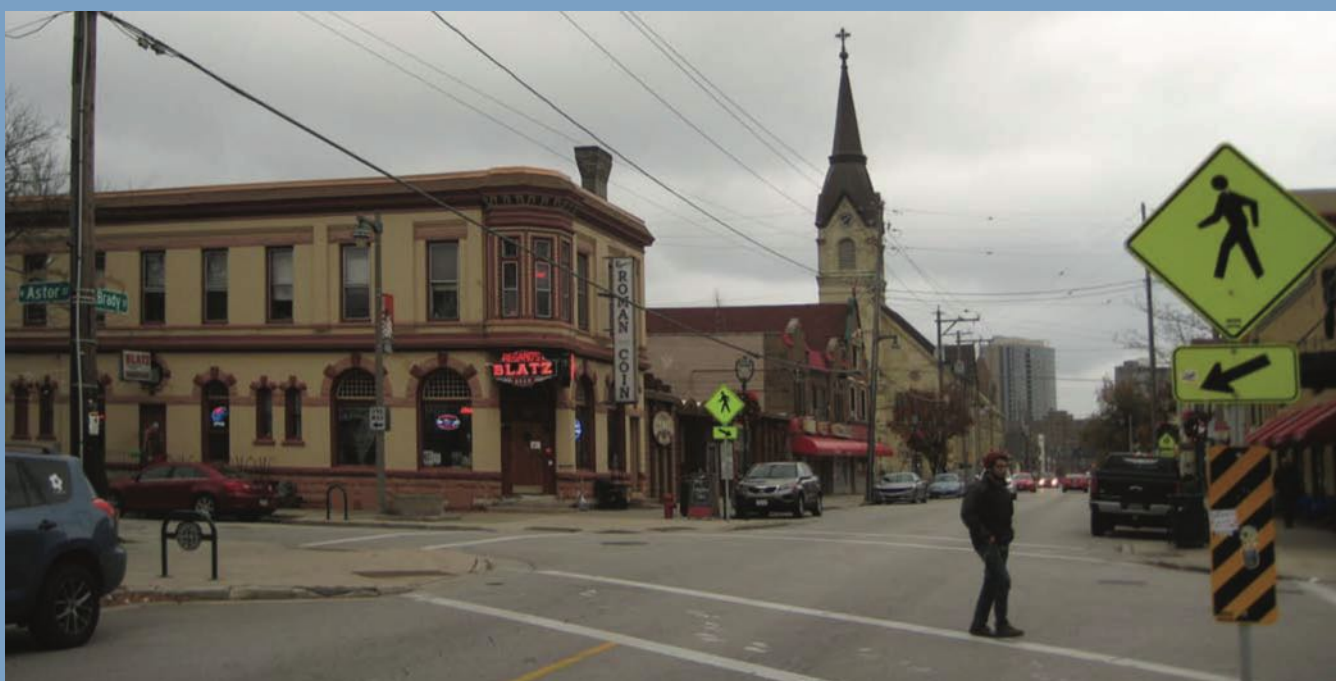
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<sup>1</sup> Urban Anthropology Inc. complies with human subjects requirements of formal research and asks informants to sign informed consent forms that stipulate anonymity, hence names are not provided with the quotes.

## PHOTOS



Brady St. & Cass St.



Brady St. and Astor St.





Brady St. and Arlington Pl.



The High Hat

## OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS



This is photo of my grandmother's tavern, now the Up & Under, on Brady St. It was taken either 1946 or 1947. Left to right: Evelyn Paikowski Anas, Dorothy Paikowski, Norbert Paikowski, Edna Stevens Paikowski, Mary Paikowski, Loretta Paikowski. Norbert & Edna were my parents. We lived in an apartment over the tavern as did my grandmother and three aunts.

--Cathy Paikowski Brown

For more information on Milwaukee neighborhoods, refer to John Gurda's *Milwaukee, City of Neighborhoods*.

Do you have great photos of this neighborhood? Are you a resident with an interesting quote about this neighborhood? Do you have recurring outings, additions, corrections, or general comments about this neighborhood? Please email your input to Dr. Jill Florence Lackey at: [jflanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:jflanthropologist@currently.com)