

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Capitol Dr; **S**-W. Burleigh;
E-N. 20th St, **W**-N. 30th St

NORTH SIDE *Franklin Heights*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Franklin Heights (also known as Amani) is a densely populated neighborhood that is largely residential. The most common housing type is the early 20th century bungalow. Except for West Hopkins that runs at a diagonal from the northwest corner to the southeast corner of the neighborhood, the streets follow a rectangular grid pattern. The main business corridor is on West Capitol Drive, and there are a few other businesses along West Burleigh and West Hopkins Streets.

Franklin Heights' topography is flat with gently rolling hills. The main green space is Moody Park, a 4-acre-commons in the southeast corner of the neighborhood. See photos below.

HISTORY

In many ways, the Franklin Heights/Amani neighborhood owes its development to the car frame manufacturer, A.O. Smith.

Early populations

In the mid-1800s, farmers used the roads of Teutonia and Hopkins to transport their farm products to the growing City of Milwaukee. Between those roads sat most of today's Franklin Heights. Access to the roads brought in a small number of mainly German farmers and gardeners to the still rural area—mostly settling in the neighborhood's western section close to Hopkins.

But it was actually the movement of the A.O. Smith factory from its Walkers Point location to the Franklin Heights area that attracted the large number of residents that left their mark on the neighborhood. In 1910, the corporation built a large factory to the area just west of 27th and Hopkins. In 1921, they opened a second factory—an automated plant—just south of the other site. Residents followed the jobs. Again, mainly Germans, the new working-class residents were responsible for building nearly all of tightly constructed bungalows that still grace the streets of the Franklin Heights/Amani neighborhood.

During the Great Depression, A.O. Smith, like most factories, was forced to lay off half its work force. But World War II brought new opportunities and the factory transitioned to wartime production.

West Hopkins Street

Residents in Franklin Heights were not entirely dependent on industry for their livelihood. Many residents were able to sustain themselves in small business ventures. Commercial corridors had been building up along West Burleigh and West Hopkins Streets since the turn of the 20th century. Hopkins Street was likely named after an early settler, Sherman Hopkins, who was a commissioner in charge of laying out the road in 1847.

Unlike the primarily German residents employed in industry, the shopkeepers were more diverse. They included proprietors from Hungary, England, Canada, Austria, Yugoslavia, China, France, and Russia. Despite the Great Depression and World War II, business was virtually teeming on Hopkins in 1944/1945. See the list and notes below.



Today's neighborhood-
Bungalows at
26th & Vienna

<i>Addresses on W. Hopkins St. in Franklin Heights in 1944/1945</i>	<i>Names of businesses, apartments, offices, and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
2100	Herbert C. Stark Filling Station
2113	Clasen Service Filling Station
2114-2120	Apartments
2116	Hopkins Street Tavern
2218	John Mutter Shoe Repair
2219	Joseph S. Zipp Radio Repair
2244	North Side Real Estate Exchange
2308	Frank L. Ankowiak Barber
2310	Adolph E. Henn Jr. Real Estate Loans and Insurance Fred C. Schell and Associates
2408	Apartments Elmer A. Laun Dentist
2409	William C. Kretschmar Barber
2410	Mildred M. Geier Beauty Shop
2416	Apartments
2417	Erwin P. Eggert Electric Company Contractors
2420	Thomas A. Warmington Material and Dress Shop
2430	Hopkins Street Building and Loan Association
2432	Johnson's Radio Shop
2436	Louise E. Holzer Barber
2439	Hinnrich's Furniture and Gift Shop
2456	Werner Brothers Company Sheet Metal Workers
2460	Frank Stix Shoes
2461	Herman Hahn Shoe Repair
2474	Frank Rosenstein Tavern
2475	Olympia Cleaners and Dyers
2484	Werra's Beauty Studio
2486	Oswald W. Senglab Barber
2488	Jim Lee Laundry

<i>Addresses on W. Hopkins St. in Franklin Heights in 1944/1945</i>	<i>Names of businesses, apartments, offices, and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
2494	Zenith Recreation Parlors Bowling
2496	Zenith Sweet Shop (Paul Horwath?)
2504	Maurice W. Hanks Variety Store
2508	Apartments
2510	Schneider Construction and Insulation Company
2511	AAA Beer Depot Distributor
2512	Mrs. Mildred J. Kunde Bakery
2515	David Quindt Barber
2516	Louis J. Dubrin Men's Furnishings
2517-2521	Harold Meissner Grocery and Meats
2518	Hugo A. Tesch Sheet Metal Workers
2522	Badger Paint and Hardware Inc.
2526	National Tea Company
2527	Mrs. Mary Buntrock Dry Goods Store
2529	Erv's Zenith Club Tavern (Ervin Moegenburg)
2531	Apartments
2535	Marie Pearl Beauty Shop
2538	Ralph G. Sander Meats
2542	Eckert's Fruit Market
2544	Mrs. Rose Marx Tavern
2550	Red Cross Pharmacy
2551	Tompkins Ice Cream Company
2601	Six Point Bar (Samuel Adamson)
2610	Rich's Coffee Shop
2614	Matthew A. Havaich Shoe Repair
2630	George J. Rank Meats TMER & T Station
2634	Michael Kilian Tavern
2635	Fiedler and Holz Service Station

<i>Addresses on W. Hopkins St. in Franklin Heights in 1944/1945</i>	<i>Names of businesses, apartments, offices, and organizations from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
2642	Cootware's Restaurant
2644	Berton Beauty Shop
2648	Terminal 5 & 10 Cent Store
2650	Wesley H. Kaye Dentist Norbert J. Wegmann Physician George H. Wegmann Physician
2750	Apartments Henry A. Kohl's Real Estate
2752	Bungalow Tavern (Joseph Bubnick)

Notes:

- Despite the economic times, there were almost no vacancies on W. Hopkins during these years.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school. Most were immigrants or children of immigrants.
- Women represented a good share of the business owners during these years.
- Herbert C. Stark, with the filling station, worked in his father's blacksmith shop prior to owning his own business.
- John Mutter, with the shoe repair shop, was an immigrant from Austria and did not live in the neighborhood. He lived in Whitefish Bay.
- Joseph S. Zipp, with the radio repair shop, lived just blocks from his business in 1940. A Hungarian immigrant, he started out as a tool and die maker before opening his shop.
- Adolph E. Henn, with the real estate company, was the son of German immigrants. He lived in Wauwatosa.
- Fred Schell lived about a mile away from his business.
- Thomas Warmington, with the dress shop, was an immigrant from Canada. He lived at the same address as his business.
- Frank Stix, with the shoe store, was a Hungarian immigrant. He lived at the same address as his shop.
- Frank Rosenstein, with the tavern, was an immigrant from Yugoslavia—possibly Jewish. He lived at the same address as his tavern.
- Oswald W. Senglab, the barber, was the son of a German immigrant. He lived at the same address as his shop.
- Jim Lee, with the laundry, was born in China. He'd come to Milwaukee from Chicago.
- Mrs. Mildred Kunde, with the bakery, was the daughter of a French immigrant. She lived at the same address as her shop. Her maiden name is unknown.
- David Quindt, the barber, was an immigrant from Russia. He lived at the same address as his shop. He had a shoe repair business prior to becoming a barber.
- Louis J. Dubrin, with the men's clothing store, was a Russian immigrant. He lived at the same address as his shop.

- Harold Meissner, with the grocery store, was the son of an Austrian immigrant father and a German immigrant mother. He'd operated his store for at least 15 years by 1945, and before that, his father Rudolph had run it. The family lived at the same address as the store.
- Hugo Tesch, with the sheet metal enterprise, was the son of a German immigrant. He and his family lived at the same address as the shop.
- Mary Buntrock (nee Boreman), with the dry goods store, was the daughter of German immigrants. She lived at the same address as her shop.
- Marie Pearl, with the beauty shop, had been in business on Hopkins for over a decade. She lived at the same address as her shop.
- Michael Kilian, with the tavern, was a German speaker who had emigrated from Hungary.
- Cootware's Restaurant was run by Myrtle Cootware. See her profile below.

Franklin Heights shopkeeper profile (1940s) *(Information from public census and city directory records)*

Myrtle Cootware

Myrtle Cootware (nee Gorell) ran Cootware's Restaurant in the 1940s. At the time, she lived one block up the street at 2508 West Hopkins with her grown daughter Ruth Frances Cootware.

This was not Myrtle's first restaurant in the Franklin Heights neighborhood. In the early 1930s, she and her then husband Elmer Cootware ran a café at 3924 North 29th Street, before the couple divorced.

Myrtle's ubiquitous presence in the neighborhood added to its diversity. She was the daughter of English immigrants (most certainly Cornish from Cornwall). She was born and raised in Iron Mountain, Michigan, where her father worked as a miner. She met her husband Elmer in that area. He was the son of a Canadian immigrant.

One might wonder what kind of food the restaurant served. While the English were never known for their culinary contributions, the Cornish had an iconic dish—the pasty (see photo). Pasties are large, flaky pies filled with steak, potato, onion, other vegetables, and herbs. Some can be filled with sweets, such as jams. The pasty developed in the mining culture of Cornwall, as the pies were a convenient, satisfying, and nutritious lunch that workers could take with them to the mines. The dish was carried over by Cornish miners to Iron Mountain, Michigan. While it is not known if Myrtle had pasties on her café menu, it seems highly unlikely she would not.

No information was found on how long Myrtle's restaurant remained in Franklin Heights. Upon retirement, she moved to Racine, where she died in 1975.

It is interesting to note that the pasty is still accessible in the area. Reynolds' Pasty Shop is just blocks away from Cootware's old place, at 2235 W. Burleigh. And is this owner also Cornish? It's not likely, as he's African American.



By the middle of the 20th century many of the children of the older residents were buying lots in newer neighborhoods to the west and north. But another Milwaukee population was seeking a new home. During the 1950s and 1960s, urban renewal and freeway building had cost African Americans thousands of homes and nearly its entire business corridor in an area once called

Bronzeville—just southeast of today’s Franklin Heights/Amani neighborhood. They began migrating to Franklin Heights and surrounding areas in the 1960s. Many also took jobs at A.O. Smith. Their population grew from less than 1 percent in 1960 to over 90 percent by 1980.

However, A.O. Smith was about to experience a downturn. The automobile industry was finding the unibody construction design of car frames more economical than the metal frames produced by the local plant. In 1997, A.O. Smith was sold to Tower Automation. The new owner was not able to turn the business around and it closed the plant in 2006. This event and the general deindustrialization trend throughout Milwaukee had negative effects on the economic lives of the residents of Franklin Heights.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, Franklin Heights has over 8,000 residents. The densest population area is in the southern section of the neighborhood, around West Hopkins Street. The largest ethnic group in the Franklin Heights/Amani neighborhood is African American (well over 9 in 10), with a scattering of Germans, indigenous Africans, Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Hmong, and people of multiple ancestry.

The median household income in Franklin Heights/Amani is just over \$20,000, placing the neighborhood on the cusp between low-income and lower middle-income strata. The largest number of occupations claimed by residents are in the fields of healthcare support, personal care, and administration. Over three times as many residents are in the healthcare support and personal care fields than the proportions in other Milwaukee areas.

Although residents in Franklin Heights/Amani are relatively low income, they have been banding together in the last decades to make the most of their neighborhood. They founded the Amani United neighborhood association to help with block watches and are working with area churches, Children’s Outing Association-Goldin, Children’s Hospital, Marquette’s Department of Nursing, and the Benedict Center for Women to expand neighborhood resources. New activities and programs added include parenting classes; after-school, weekend, and summer youth programs; a pediatric and family clinic; an early childhood education center; block cleanups; and family fun nights. Residents have also worked with Milwaukee County Park Service to improve Moody Park, including adding features such as a community building, basketball courts, walking paths, and a splash pad.

In addition to the social programs, new businesses are being attracted to the area. Several buildings that had been part of the A.O. Smith complex are being developed by General Capital Group. The new development is expected to add much-needed jobs to the area.

IMPORTANT NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

- **Dominican Center for Women, Inc.**, at 2470 W. Locust, a non-profit organization providing educational opportunities, economic development, and better health outcomes for the Amani Community.
- **COA-Goldin**, at 2320 W. Burleigh, a mostly child-serving non-profit with early education programs.

RECURRING NEARBY OUTINGS (Health conditions permitting)

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.

FONDY FARMERS MARKET			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
May thru Sep., Sat. 9am-12pm	2200 W. Fond du Lac Ave.	Fresh produce from Wisconsin farmers, baked goods, arts, crafts, activities.	Free

FREE FAMILY SWIM			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Tue. 6:00-6:55pm females; 7:00-7:55pm males	Washington H.S., 2525 N. Sherman Blvd., enter main gym door on Sherman Blvd.	Swimming. Children 7 and under must be accompanied by adult. Swim caps can be purchased at site. 875-6025	Families, free

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4th, 9am-12:30pm	Sherman Park, 3000 N. Sherman Blvd.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, games.	Free

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

If you are a resident of Franklin Heights/Amani and have an uplifting comment to make about this neighborhood, please send an email to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Emanuel Evangelist Temple at 25th & Hopkins



Todays neighborhood-Moody Park



Todays neighborhood-Auer Ave. School

Todays neighborhood-Word of Faith Worship
Center at 24th Pl. & Auer





Today's neighborhood-Goldin Center

For more information on Milwaukee neighborhoods, refer to John Gurda's *Milwaukee, City of Neighborhoods* and Jill Florence Lackey's and Rick Petrie's *Germans in Milwaukee: A neighborhood history*.

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

¹ Photo attribution: <https://media.defense.gov/2010/Oct/22/2000314432/-1/-1/0/101022-F-5212M-001.JPG>