

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Capitol Dr; **S-W.** Concordia Ave;

E-N. 92nd St; **W-N.** Mayfair Rd

NORTHWEST SIDE *Golden Valley*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Golden Valley is a high-density neighborhood with a wide variety of home architectural styles. These include 1950s ranch style houses, Tudor, Cape Cod, Colonial style homes, and a few bungalows.

The neighborhood topography is relatively hilly, with gently rolling to a few steep inclines. The streets generally follow a grid pattern except for Lisbon Avenue and Metcalf Place that cut through the northeast corner of the neighborhood at diagonals from North 92nd Street to West Capitol Drive. The main business corridor is along West Capitol Drive.

The area has green space. Hartung Park, located along Menomonee River Parkway, crosses the boundaries of Milwaukee and Wauwatosa. The commons has a pond, prairie grasses, trails, a playground, and sculptures. See neighborhood photos below.

HISTORY

Until the 1920s, the area that is today's Golden Valley neighborhood was situated in the unincorporated Town of Wauwatosa, which was bounded by 27th Street to 124th Street, and Greenfield Avenue to Hampton. Between 1924 and 1928, the City of Milwaukee annexed the wider area that included much of today's neighborhood.

Early populations

The arterial that cuts through Golden Valley at an angle, Lisbon Avenue, was once an Indian trail. It became a plank road in the 1850s. Named for its destination, the road connected Milwaukee to the town of Lisbon. Small hamlets of mainly German farmers grew up along Lisbon, and in the Golden Valley area on the banks of the Menomonee River.

One of these Germans was Theodore Hartung, an immigrant from Prussia. In 1860, the 34-year-old Hartung lived with his wife Cora and children Ralph, Arthur, and Frederick in a hamlet called Smithville. The hamlet was named after Hartung's Massachusetts-born neighbor, Erasmus Smith, who had settled in the area a decade earlier. Among the resident families were the Heinmans, Larkins, Weismanns, Benzes, and Weises from Prussia and a handful of other Yankee settlers.

Just southwest of Smithville, on the flat bank of the Menomonee River, was a race track that had been built by a Martin Curtis when he owned a 320-acre farm there. To the east of Smithville was the Five Mile House at the junction of Lisbon and the north and south section line road. The road house, a mere 15x30 feet in dimensions, served as a place where wayfarers could rest and purchase a gallon of whiskey.

Today's neighborhood-
Hartung Park at 99th & Townsend



The Hartung Quarry

One of Theodore Hartung's sons, Frederick, made a name for himself in the Golden Valley area. In 1910, Frederick began building a quarry along the east bank of the Menomonee River, digging out the dolomite that was used in building homes and commercial buildings in the area (which included the tower at nearby Mount Mary College). The pit was nearly 100 feet deep. Hartung also served as a Republican member of the Wisconsin State Assembly.

Save for these few relatively isolated homesteads, the Golden Valley area did not begin to attract large numbers of settlers until the 1950s. In the 1930s, there were few roads, less than 10 residents, and only 1 business in the area. By the late 1940s several new roads opened, but there were still fewer than 50 residences and 7 businesses. The overwhelming majority of residents were German, but there was also a scattering of Austrians, Dutch, Italians, Finns, Irish, and English. Over half of the businesses were on Capitol Drive.

Capitol Drive

Below is a snapshot of the sparse commercial properties on this street in the Golden Valley area in 1947.

<i>Addresses on W. Capitol Dr. in 1947</i>	<i>Name of business from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
9308	Erwin Behn Tavern
9532	Mrs. Katie Schmidt Apiarist
1730	Horseman's Club
9901	Archery Club

Summary and notes from census and other records:

- The businesses on Capitol in the late 1940s, with the Horseman's and Archery Clubs and apiarist, give the area a rustic aura.
- Erwin Behn had been a butcher before opening his tavern.
- See the resident profile on Katie Schmidt on the next page. An apiarist is involved in animal husbandry, mostly bee-keeping.
- No information was found on the Horseman's Club.
- The Archery Club was a tavern by the mid-1950s.

One of the business people and a long-time resident of the Golden Valley area was Mrs. Katie Schmidt. See her profile below.

Golden Valley Resident (1940s)

*Name selected from the 1947 City Directory in the Golden Valley area on Capitol Drive
(information from U.S. Census and other public records)*

Mrs. Katie Schmidt

In the 1940s, Katie Van Bortels Schmidt owned her own apiary (bee farm) near 96th and Capitol (see stock photo of beekeeper to the right). By 1940 she had been widowed from husband George, a house carpenter, and lived with her only child, a grown son named Stanley. The family had also farmed in the area before George's death that occurred sometime in the 1930s. In the 1940 census, neither Katie nor son Stanley claimed any earnings, although Katie reported working 60 hours a week as an apiarist and Stanley 36 hours. The apiary might have been a hobby farm for both. They reported income from "other sources," which could have been a number of things, including bartering, life insurance, rent, sale of property, inheritance or Depression era government subsidies.

Katie had a deep history in the old Town of Wauwatosa—a part of which would become the Milwaukee Golden Valley neighborhood. Her parents, Peter Van Bortel and Johanna Houberstein, were immigrants from Holland, and had operated a farm in the area since the late 1800s.

When Katie was in her teens, she went to work as a servant for the Seth Swan family. Seth's father, Emery, was one of the early settlers in the Town of Wauwatosa. The wealthy family later left their name on several local places, including Swan Circle in Milwaukee, and Swan Park and Swan Boulevard in the City of Wauwatosa.

Katie remained active in her apiary until at least her late 60s. She eventually retired in the Wisconsin Dells, and died in 1978 at the age of 95. She was buried alongside her husband at Lincoln Memorial Cemetery. See gravestone below.



The making of a neighborhood and a park

In the 1950s and 1960s Golden Valley began to fill up—no doubt helped by the roughly three million tons of rock that had been extracted from Hartung’s Quarry.

However, the quarry closed in 1961. Between 1964 and the millennium, the City of Milwaukee began to fill the huge hole left by the quarry—at first with trash and later clean fill such as concrete and soil. In 2005 a group of residents formed the Hartung Park Community Association to create today’s park. Because the proposed park land was located in both the City of Milwaukee and the City of Wauwatosa, a collaboration was required between both cities and the community association. The ribbon cutting for the first phase of development was held in summer of 2008, and development continues to the present day.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today there are approximately 3,000 residents in Golden Valley. The neighborhood is slightly more diverse than it was in the 1950s. Approximately 8 in 10 residents are still European American, with about half claiming ancestry in Germany—the rest mostly Polish or Irish. A little over 1 in 10 residents are African Americans and 1 in 20 Latinos (mostly of Mexican descent). The rest are American Indians, Asians (mainly Indian, Korean, and Filipino), and people of multiple backgrounds.

The neighborhood is middle to upper middle income with a median household income of just under \$60,000 annually. Golden Valley is also a highly educated neighborhood, with over half of the residents holding bachelor’s or graduate degrees. The highest number of occupations in the neighborhood are in the fields of administration, education, and sales. Nearly three times as many Golden Valley residents are in the computer/math field than in other Milwaukee areas.

Home ownership is also very high in Golden Valley. Over 9 in 10 property units are owner occupied, and approximately 8 in 10 have select monthly costs (e.g., mortgages, taxes, deeds of trust, insurance, contracts to purchase) in the range of \$1,001 to \$2,000. Rents are more modest, with nearly all units going for \$501 to \$1,000 a month.

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.

HARTUNG FARMERS MARKET			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Jun. thru Sep., Wed. 3:30-7pm	Hartung Park, 3266 Menomonee River Pkwy.	Fresh produce from Wisconsin farmers, baked goods, arts, crafts.	Free

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT—NORTHWEST SIDE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
First week Aug., weekday 5:30-8:30pm	Kops Park: 3321 N. 86th St.	Fun evening of free food, games, rides, chance to dialogue with local police and community organizations,	Free

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--ENDERIS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4, 8:30-11:30am	Enderis Playfield, 2978 N. 72nd	Parade, games, music, watermelon-eating contest.	Free

SLEDDING--WAUWATOSA

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Winter, daytime, evening	Currie Park, 3535 N. Mayfair Rd.	Sledding hills for family and friends, plus lighted sledding 4:30-8:30pm.	Free

These outings are provided courtesy of MECAH Publishing.

QUOTES FROM RESIDENTS

If you are a resident of Golden Valley and have an interesting observation to make about this neighborhood, send your quote to JFLanthropologist@sbcglobal.net

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 93rd & Keefe

Todays neighborhood-
In Hartung Park looking northeast



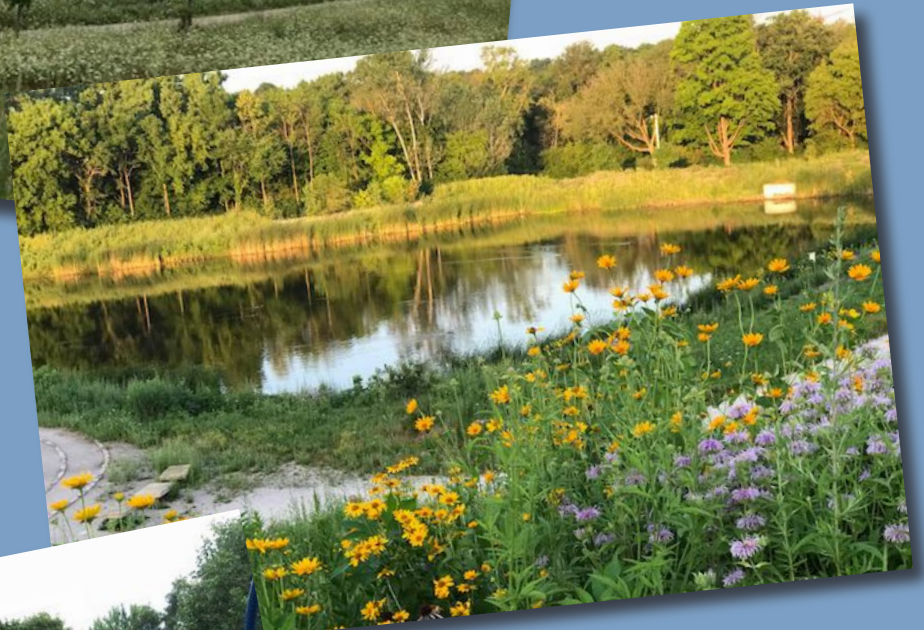
Todays neighborhood-
100th St. looking south to Hartung Park



Todays neighborhood-
House at 92nd & Keefe



Today's neighborhood-Hartung Park
All photos on this page courtesy of
neighborhood resident Denise Barchus





Today's neighborhood-Hartung Park. Photo courtesy of neighborhood resident Denise Barchus

ⁱ Photo attribution: <https://static.pexels.com/photos/173361/pexels-photo-173361.jpeg>

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: JFLanthropologist@sbcglobal.net