

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Bluemound Rd; S-I-94;
E-N. 76th St; W-Glenview Ave

WEST SIDE *Honey Creek Parkway*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Honey Creek Parkway is a scenic neighborhood with Honey Creek and its green boundaries comprising a good portion of the northwest section of the terrain. The neighborhood topography is mainly flat with gently rolling hills. On the east side of the neighborhood the streets follow a grid pattern; on the west side the streets follow the curve of Honey Creek.

Honey Creek Parkway is a neighborhood of medium population density. Housing styles vary by area, with a number of bungalows near the east side and mid-20th century Cape Cod homes toward the west. Businesses are mainly centered along West Bluemound Road. See neighborhood photos below.

HISTORY

Honey Creek Parkway is named after the street of the same name that cuts north/south across the neighborhood. The street, in turn, was named after the creek that it shadows. Tradition holds that the creek got its name from the many beehives and fruit trees along its shores.

Early populations

A hamlet called Honey Creek grew up along the creek of that name in today's West Allis in the early 1800s, just blocks south of today's neighborhood. The small settlement, founded by pioneers from New York, housed a blacksmith shop, post office, schoolhouse, and homesteads, and was served by three stages each week. In 1855 a steam sawmill was built along the creek by Bigalow Case and Edwin Youmans. The sawmill closed a few decades later when the company had depleted the area of timber. Other early settlers in the Honey Creek hamlet included the Cornwall, Douville, Smith, Sheldon, Strong, Marsh, and Marlott families. The settlers were mainly people of British ancestry who were practicing Episcopalians and Baptists.

As settlers—mainly Germans--began to migrate west from the Washington Park neighborhood, the terrain to the north of the West Allis hamlet began a long process of filling up. The City of Milwaukee annexed the area that would become the Honey Creek Parkway neighborhood. By the early 1930s there were eight households and one grocery store on Dixon Street and a handful of households scattered across the few other neighborhood blocks.

Bluemound Road was just being built in the 1930s. The street followed an Indian trail from Milwaukee to Dane County. It was home to the following businesses of Honey Creek Parkway in 1933. See notes.



Today's neighborhood-
CCC camp sign on Honey Creek Parkway

Addresses on W. Bluemound in 1933	Names of businesses from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u>
7525	Texas Company Filling Station

<i>Addresses on W. Bluemound in 1933</i>	<i>Names of businesses from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
7623	Blue Mound Motor Service Auto Repair
7747	William J. Callen Tavern
8306	Barnsdall-O'Neil Oil Company Service Station

Summary and notes from census and other records:

- Even during the early years of the Great Depression the reliance on the automobile in this neighborhood was apparently very strong, with three of the four businesses serving auto needs.
- The Texas Company was another name for Texaco. Texaco was growing extremely fast in the early 1930s. In 1931, Texaco purchased the Illinois-based Indian Oil Company. This expanded Texaco's refining and marketing base in the Midwest. The next year, Texaco introduced Fire Chief gasoline nationwide, a so-called "super-octane" motor fuel that was supposed to exceed government standards for gasoline for fire engines and other emergency vehicles.
- William J. Callen, with the tavern, was one of the few non-Germans in Honey Creek Parkway. He was the grandson of Irish immigrants.

Something else was in development in this area during the Great Depression years.

Honey Creek Parkway in the New Deal era

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a public work relief program created by the Roosevelt administration that operated between 1933 and 1942. It was designed to provide work for unemployed, unmarried men from relief programs. Honey Creek Parkway became a program recipient. A CCC Camp Bluemound (Company 2606) was set up along Honey Creek to help with erosion and flood control and enhance infrastructure and utilities in the area. Today a sign stands at the site of that Great Depression camp (see photo below).

During the early years of the Great Depression, Milwaukee was not as badly distressed as other cities. But it would soon catch up. Many residents, including those in the Honey Creek Parkway area, would come to rely on the federal government for their sustenance. See the story of randomly selected, neighborhood residents below.

Honey Creek Parkway random residents (1930s)

*Names selected randomly from the 1933 City Directory in the Honey Creek Parkway area
(other information found in census records)*

Frank L. and Gertrude Kamrath

In the 1930s, Frank Kamrath and his wife Gertrude lived at 7921 W. Dixon (*see Urban Anthropology photo below*). They rented the generously-sized home for \$20 a month. The two were childless and in their mid-thirties at the start of the Great Depression. Although

Frank had only completed the 6th grade in school (not uncommon for the times), he had a job as a skilled machinist in a motor factory in the early 1930s.

Like their neighbors, Frank and Gertrude were Germans. Frank was the son of Prussian immigrants and was raised in Cambria, Wisconsin. He'd held a job from his teenage years, working first in a grist mill in Cambria, and later became an auto mechanic in Milwaukee. He married Gertrude, who had hailed from Missouri, sometime between age 27 and 37.

However, as the Great Depression began to take its toll on Milwaukee, it also affected the Kamraths. By 1940, Frank no longer had his job as a skilled worker in a motor factory. He was instead working as a laborer for the government, probably in a WPA construction project. He told the census taker that he was earning \$650 a year while working a 40-hour week, less than half the median income for Americans at the time. Frank and Gertrude were still childless and still renting their home at 79th and Dixon. The rent was now \$25 a month.



Honey Creek Parkway after the Great Depression

Development of the neighborhood nearly ceased during the Depression years and through World War II. The great postwar housing boom had only a small effect on Honey Creek Parkway. By 1949 there were still few through streets in the area, and Honey Creek Drive and Parkway were just under construction. Dixon now had 23 households, but few other blocks had gained population. The number of businesses on Bluemound within and near the neighborhood had remained relatively stagnant, with the exception of new apartment buildings. See below.

<i>Addresses on W. Bluemound in 1949</i>	<i>Names of businesses, apartments from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
7515	Gilles Frozen Custard
7535	Clark's Super Gas Station
7608	Reinold E. Schoen Filling Station
8041	Apartments
8103	Apartments

Summary and notes from census and other records:

- As in 1933, gas stations were still the main business on this stretch of Bluemound.
- Gilles Frozen Custard, which is still at the same address, was opened in 1938. It remains the oldest custard stand in Milwaukee.
- Reinold E. Schoen, with the filling station, lived on Milwaukee's far northwest side while running his gas station. He retired in Waupaca.

During the 1950s, Honey Creek Parkway experienced a slight population increase, resulting in many of the Cape Cod homes on the western edge of the neighborhood (see photo below).

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, Honey Creek Parkway has less than 2,000 residents. Of these nearly 9 in 10 are European Americans--the majority of which still claim German ancestry. About 1 in 25 each are African Americans and Latinos (mostly of Mexican descent). There are also a scattering of Filipinos, American Indians, and people of mixed ancestry in the neighborhood.

Honey Creek Parkway is a middle-income neighborhood with a median household income of just over \$50,000 a year. Slightly over half of all residents hold bachelor's or graduate degrees, making this a well-educated neighborhood relative to other Milwaukee areas. The main occupations claimed by residents in the neighborhood are in the fields of computers/math, sales, and administration. Honey Creek Parkway has over four times the number of residents in the computers/math field than Milwaukeeans in other areas.

Home ownership is very high in the neighborhood. Over three-quarters of all property units are owned. Costs of owning a home are slightly higher than in many Milwaukee areas, where select costs for 9 of 10 Honey Creek Parkway properties (e.g., mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, taxes, insurance) range from \$1,001 to \$2,000 a month. Rents are reasonable with about 8 in 10 rental units going for \$501 to \$1,000 a month.

INTERESTING NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

- **St. Vincent Pallotti Parish and School**, at 201 N. 76th St. a parish and K-4 through 8 school (see photo).
- **CCC Camp sign**, at 8201 Honey Creek Pkwy (see above and photo below).
- **Pius XI High School**, at 135 N. 76th St., a Catholic school with a college-preparatory curriculum.

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.

ICE FISHING & WINTER SPORTS SHOW			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Dec., Fri. 12-7pm; Sat. 10am-7pm, Sun. 9am-2pm	Wisconsin State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th, West Allis	Rows of exhibits with products and services dedicated to the ice fishing and winter sports enthusiast.	Free

HMONG NEW YEAR

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Dec., Sat., Sun. 8am-5pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Celebration marks the end of the Hmong harvest season, which ends on November 31, and a time of several days of music, singing, dancing, games, and food.	unk

WONDERFUL WORLD OF WEDDINGS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jan., Sat., Sun. 10am-4:30pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	The latest trends in wedding gowns, tuxedos, photographers, florists, music, sample wedding cakes and food tastings, over 100 exhibitors.	unk

MILWAUKEE BOAT SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jan., one week, two weekends (except Mon & Tue)	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Wisconsin's largest boat show with over 400 boats from over 80 manufacturers, yachts, aluminum fishing boats, ski boats, pontoons, runabouts & jet skis, plus dock systems & marine accessories.	unk

GREAT LAKES PET EXPO

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jan. 1-5pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Wisconsin's largest charitable event that raises money for companion animals in Wisconsin. Featuring exhibitors including local Wisconsin rescues, pet products and services, great entertainment, and the best shopping for pet lovers.	unk

WOMAN UP!

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Feb. Sat. 10am-4pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	A day to celebrate all walks of a woman's life with 250+ vendors and experts in health care, fitness, finance, beauty, education and food as you shop, sample, and listen to presentations.	unk

MILWAUKEE/NARI SPRING IMPROVEMENT SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Feb. Thu-Sun., 12-8pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Home improvement trade show with special attractions and interactive entertainment.	unk

MILWAUKEE RV SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Feb. Thu. thru Sun.	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Displays and sales of a wide range of recreational vehicles including pop-up campers, travel trailers, 5th wheels and motorhomes.	unk

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL SPORTS SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Mar. Sun. thru Wed., see hours on website	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Exhibits on fishing, hunting, camping, boating and outdoor adventure.	unk

WINTER POWWOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Mar., Sat. 11am-10pm, Sun. 11am-6pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	American Indian traditional powwow with interactive tribal dances planned to include the general public, with extensive marketplace, traditional foods, and family friendly environment.	unk

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Jun., Jul., Aug. Wed.'s, 6-11pm	State Fair Park, Budweiser Pavilion, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Milwaukee's most popular local bands entertain thousands of fans each week at this indoor/outdoor family friendly concert venue.	Free

GREEK FEST

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jun. Fri./Sat. 11am-11pm, Sun. 11am-9pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Festival of Greek food, dance, concerts, marketplace.	Free

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR--\$2 THURSDAY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Aug., Thu. (promotion ends at 4pm)	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Barnyard animals, crafts, live music, big name entertainers, food, exhibits, and, of course, a midway.	\$2 with 2 non-perishable food items or donation

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR—FAMILY FUN MONDAY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Aug., Mon. 8am-6pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Barnyard animals, crafts, live music, big name entertainers, food, exhibits, and, of course, a midway.	unk

HOLIDAY FOLK FAIR INTERNATIONAL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid November, Fri.- Sun.	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Multicultural festival of music, food, dance, and the arts.	unk

HORSE EXPO

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Sep., Thu. 7am- 9pm, Fri. 7am-5pm, Sat. 7am-9pm, Sun. 7am-1pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Wisconsin State 4-H horse expo including English and Western pleasure, showmanship, trail, and more.	Free

MAKER FAIRE MILWAUKEE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Sep., Sat. 9am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Showcase of invention, creativity, tech enthusiasts, crafters, artists, educators, tinkers, students and others.	Free

HARVEST FAIR

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Sep., Fri. 5-11pm, Sat. 9am-11pm, Sun. 9am-5pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Autumn fair that features rides, food, games such as pumpkin bowling, and contests such as the pumpkin chuckin'.	Free

FAMILY FREE DAY AT THE ZOO

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Oct., Nov., Dec., Jan., Mar., select Sat.'s 9:30am-4:30pm	Milwaukee County Zoo, 10001 W. Bluemound Rd., Wauwatosa	If you want to stay warm, we have many indoor animal exhibits for your enjoyment. If you're more of the outdoorsy type, you'll also find many outdoor animal exhibits.	Free

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT—ZOO

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
First week Aug., weekday 4- 8pm	Milwaukee County Zoo, 10001 W Bluemound Rd., Wauwatosa	Fun evening of free food, games, rides, animals, chance to dialogue with local police and community organizations,	Free, pre- registration required

Most of 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 this neighborhood and wish to make an interesting observation about it, please send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-
St. Vincent Pallotti School



Today's neighborhood-
Cape Cod houses on 80th & Dixon



Today's neighborhood-
Houses on 80th St. & Fairview



Today's neighborhood-Honey Creek



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 79th & Dixon



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 77th & Stevenson with St. Vincent Pallotti Parish Church in the background

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@currently.com

OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS

These photos are of an electric rapid transit line that ran through the Honey Creek Parkway neighborhood with additional photos of the area as it looks today (courtesy of neighborhood resident Nate Tennie).



Railroad tracks near 79th St.
(date unknown) and a recent photo of
the same area (right).



Trestle bridge at 117 S. 76th st. circa 1950.
Pius XI High School in background.

Trestle bridge at 117 S. 76th St. Circa 1950



Detail of above photo and
as it looks today (right).

