

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Burleigh St; **S**-W. North Ave;
E-N. 19th St, **W**-N. 27th St

NORTH SIDE *Park West*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Park West (also known as Amani) is a neighborhood of high population density that is primarily residential. The most common housing types are early 20th century bungalows and older duplexes. The area teems with beautiful churches.

With the exception of West Fond du Lac Avenue that runs at a diagonal from 27th Street at the western edge of the neighborhood to North Avenue, the streets mostly follow a rectangular grid pattern. A few--West Monroe and West Medford--run parallel to Fond du Lac for a few blocks. The main business corridors are along West Fond du Lac and North Avenues.

The Park West/Amani neighborhood's topography is flat, interspersed with gently rolling hills. The area has no designated public green areas, save for a scattering of empty lots. See neighborhood photos below.

HISTORY

Like its Franklin Heights neighbor to the north, the Park West/Amani neighborhood owes much of its development to the car frame manufacturer, A.O. Smith.

Early populations

Germans had been in Milwaukee since the early half of the 19th century. Settling mainly west of the Milwaukee River, they reached the North Division area just east of Park West in the 1870s. There they built one- and two-story homes; North Division High School; Union Cemetery; churches; taverns; and scores of shops along Teutonia Avenue, Walnut Street, and North Avenue. Industries were developing in and around the area, and most residents were able to walk to work.

It was actually the movement of the A.O. Smith factory from its Walkers Point location to the Franklin Heights neighborhood that attracted the large number of residents that left their mark on the entire Amani area, including most of Franklin Heights, Park West, and parts of Metcalfe Park. In 1910, the corporation built a large factory to the area just west of 27th and Hopkins. By 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 well-constructed bungalows that still grace the streets of the Park West/Amani neighborhood.

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

Fond du Lac Avenue

Industry was not the only livelihood of Park West residents. Many found their way into small businesses. And while the plurality of shopkeepers had German ancestry, the proprietors along the commercial corridors were a polyglot of European ethnicity. This included Germans,



Today's neighborhood--
Greater Little Hill Church

English, Poles, Irish, Swiss, Austrians, Hungarians, Irish, Norwegians, Jews, Welsh, Russians, Slovenians, Belgians, Serbs, and Swedes.

Fond du Lac had a crowded, teeming, business corridor in the Park West area at the close of the Great Depression. This 1850s plank road got its name because it led to the city of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. The commercial corridor had been developing on the road since the late 1800s. Below is a list of businesses that were in operation in 1944/1945.

<i>Addresses on W. Fond du Lac in the Park West area in 1944/1945</i>	<i>Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2004	Ottmann Radio Service
2006-2008	Mrs. Esther O'Brien Restaurant
2007-2009	Mrs. Antonio Imse Tavern
2012	George Vogel Plumber
2016	Kasper Hansemann Barber
2017	Laurel A. Patterson Wood Turner
2019	Independent Blind Craft
2021	Frank Markert Shoe Repair
2025	Mrs. Clara Leister Tavern
2029	Lechleitner Hardware James R. Clark Sporting Goods
2032	Carson's Hearing Aid Carrier Irving Lowe Lawyer
2035	Arnold's Lunch
2039	Lake Appliance Company
2040	George T. Grimsrud Shoes
2041	Clarence L. Salmon Lawyer Goerge W. Nordholm Dentist
2043	Bell Fur Shop Lambrecht Farms Inc. Dairy Products
2049	Fidelity Savings and Loan Association
2102	First Wisconsin National Bank
2118	A & P Foods Family Welfare Association First Credit Company Mrs. Helene Schwartz Beauty Shop

<i>Addresses on W. Fond du Lac in the Park West area in 1944/1945</i>	<i>Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2126-2130	Badger Paint and Hardware Store
2138	Miriam Eisenstadt Caps Manufacturer Samuel Eisenstadt Men's Furnishings
2144	Northern Auto Supply Company
2146	Frank Hebar Tavern
2150	Pasch Radio Store
2202	Propp's Bicycle Shop
2210	Jerome J. Holzbauer Jewelers
2212	Mrs. Wilma M. Spring Beauty Shop
2216	Frank F. Raffay Restaurant
2218	Jennie Monahan Milliner
2224	Apartments
2229	Sears Roebuck and Company Farm Equipment
2231	Apartments
2233	Wacksole Company Musical Instruments
2239	Kaestner Funeral Home (Edw. G.)
2245	Milwaukee Wool Carding Mills Charles Weingandt & Sons Quilting Manufacturers
2251	Nels P. Olson Barber
2253	John C. Simmons Tavern and Bowling Alleys
2309	Pioneer Builders Inc. Leslie Markovich Real Estate
2311	Reimar Apartments
2313	Sidney G. Siegel Liquor Store
2316	Ernest W. Baumgardt Bar
2318	Gerhard A. Borchardt Barber
2322	Max Reichenberger Furrier
2323	Klug Hardware Company
2324	Walter F. Luebke Willow Wares Company
2341	Broken Drum Supply Company (Coal, wood, etc.)
2352	Doctor's Pharmacy Edmund C. Neumann Physician

<i>Addresses on W. Fond du Lac in the Park West area in 1944/1945</i>	<i>Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2353	Froemming Funeral Home Inc.
2400	John L. Lucas Filling Station and Auto Repair
2401	Albert T. Carlson Tavern
2415	Louis Pesick Radio and Sound Service
2437	Milwaukee Sprayer Manufacturing Company Robert J. Jones Insecticides Universal Duplicating Machines Inc.
2439	American Metal Spinning Company Wilke Leathercraft Company United Glove Company
2444	George A. Schaeffer Tavern
2446	Fed Stein Shoe Repair
2449	Herziger's Sheboygan Sausage Company
2454	Erwin Dettmann Landscape Gardening
2459	Radio Theatre
2462	Economy Metal and Wire Products Manufacturing
2463	Sullivan's Radio Shop
2465	Fondale Apartments
2466	Joshua L. Terwilliger Aprons
2467-2469	Harris Calorific Sis. Company Welding
2473	Schumann & Roden Sheet Metal Workers
2476	Reliance Auto Painting & Body Company
2482	L. Weimann Department Store Wiemann Realty Company
2483	Joseph Guendert Tailor
2486	United States Hoffman Machinery Corporation Air Appliances
2487	Ideal Tire Supply Company
2490	Mrs. Magdalene Bugar Tavern
2496	Lothar F. Gitter Filling Station
2497-2499	Lester Fenske Tavern
2501	Western Woolen Mills

<i>Addresses on W. Fond du Lac in the Park West area in 1944/1945</i>	<i>Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2505	Mrs. Alice Boldt Tavern
2512	Marvin J. Bemman Used Cars
2513	Edwin F. Fahl Bakery
2519	Lours Koell Shoe Repair
2524	Lawton & Lawton Real Estate
2527	Frey Upholstering Company
2533	Lee J. Hildeman Electric Light Bulbs Hildy Products Company Electrical Equipment
2534	Refrigeration Parts Company
2536	Holland Furnace Company
2538	James L. Morgan Furrier
2544-2548	Ernest E. Lambrecht Tavern and Bowling Alleys
2604	Milwaukee Venetian Blind Company Wisconsin Shoe Findings
2606	Milwaukee Printed String Company
2616	Walter Ayling Jr. Tavern
2617	Jefferson Hall William F. Ockert Tavern Herman Anderson Bowling
2622	Joseph P. Bausch Tavern
2623	Cream City Heating Company
2624	Lavona Raymond Tavern
2627	Brandt Upholstering Shop
2628	Joseph J. Strumberger Barber
2628B	Lester J. Fieldhack Electrical Contractor
2631	Gustave A. Larson Wholesale Refrigerators
2634	Fieldhack's Flower and Gift Shop
2636	A.J. Schoenecker Shoe Company
2638	Moorman Printing Company
2640	Hauser Housing Service Real Estate
2642	Harry Friedman Dentist Mrs. Myrtle Block Beauty Shop

Addresses on W. Fond du Lac in the Park West area in 1944/1945	Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory
2646	Advance Refrigeration Company, Inc. Advance Engineering Corp.
2650	David M. Goodsett Dentist Kenneth J. Karr Physician
2652	John R. Woelffer Dentist Charles S. Flemming Lawyer
2654	Dr. Neumann's Pharmacy

Notes from census and other public records:

- Even though the area had been affected by the Great Depression, World War II, and rationing, it is surprising to see the number of leisure time establishments that survived in 1944/1945, including 14 taverns, 2 bowling alleys, a liquor store, a theatre, and 2 restaurants.
- Women were well-represented among the many shopkeepers on Fond du Lac.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants.
- Esther O'Brien, with the restaurant, was a widow born in New York and the daughter of an immigrant from England. In 1940, she lived on Fond du Lac Ave., probably at the site of her café.
- Antonia (incorrectly listed as Antonio) Imse (nee Rechinski), with the tavern, was the daughter of Polish immigrants. She and her deceased husband had lived on Fond du Lac since before 1900. Her husband Otto had once had a barber shop at that location.
- Kasper Hansemann, the barber, was an immigrant from Switzerland.
- Laurel A. Patterson, the wood turner, had worked as a radio serviceman prior to opening his shop. No doubt a good number of his wood turning projects were radio frames.
- Clara Leister was not running her tavern as an inheritance from a deceased husband. Her husband was still in the home in the 1940s working as a supervisor in a factory. The couple lived in the Park West neighborhood on N. 21st Street in 1940. Clara was the daughter of parents who had immigrated from Switzerland and Germany.
- George T. Grimsrud, with the shoe store, was the son of Norwegian immigrants. Before coming to Milwaukee, George had worked in a shoe factory in Ohio.
- Helene Schwartz, the hairdresser, was the daughter of German immigrants. Her husband was a machinist.
- The Eisenstadts, with the clothing shops, were Russian Jews. *See their profile below.*
- Frank Hebar, with the tavern, was a Slovenian from Hungary. He lived on Fond du Lac, probably at the same address as his bar.
- Jerome Holzbauer, with the jewelry store, was the grandson of German immigrants. He lived about a block away from his shop on Fond du Lac.
- Wilma Spring (nee Reise), the beautician, was divorced and lived at the same address as her shop.
- Frank Raffay, with the restaurant, was one of the few shopkeepers who did not live in the neighborhood. He lived in Wauwatosa. He was an Austrian immigrant.

- Jennie Monahan, the milliner, was the daughter of Irish immigrants, as was her husband Ed. They had lived in Arkansas before moving to Milwaukee.
- Ed Kaestner, the mortician, was the son of a German immigrant. He and his family lived at the same address as his funeral home.
- Charles Weingandt, with the quilting factory, was born in Germany. He'd worked at a cotton mill before opening his business.
- Nels P. Olson, the barber, lived at the same address as his shop. He was born in Norway.
- Leslie Markovich, with the real estate company, was an oddity on the street. He'd graduated from college. He emigrated from Hungary as a teen in 1920.
- Sidney G. Siegel, with the liquor store, was raised in the neighborhood. He was the son of Russian (probably Jewish) immigrants.
- Walter Luebke owned a home on 21st near Center in the neighborhood. He was the son of German immigrants.
- John L. Lucas, with the gas station, was at this location since at least the late 1920s. He also lived on Fond du Lac. He was the son of a Belgian immigrant.
- Louis Pesic/Pesick, with the radio/sound store, was the son of immigrants from Yugoslavia. Probably a Serb, he lived on 24th Street.
- Robert J. Jones, with the insecticide business, appears to have been an immigrant from Wales.
- Fred Stein, with the shoe repair shop, was a German immigrant. He lived at the same address as his shop.
- Joshua Terwilliger, with the apron factory, was born in Wisconsin, but his family had deep roots in New York. He lived on Fond du Lac.
- Joseph Guendert, the tailor, lived next door to his shop. He was a Hungarian immigrant.
- Lothar Gitter, with the filling station, was the son of an Austrian immigrant. He'd grown up in Outagamie, Wisconsin.
- Lester Fenske, the barkeep, had run his tavern at that location for at least a decade.
- Marvin J. Bemman, with the used car dealership, had grown up in his maternal grandfather's house on Wright Street, an immigrant from Germany.
- Edwin Fahl, with the bakery, was the son of German immigrants. He lived at the same address as his shop.
- Louis Koell, with the shoe repair place, was an Austrian immigrant. He lived at the same address as his shop.
- Lee (Leland) J. Hildeman, with the light bulb store, had worked as a salesman for an electrical company before opening his own shop.
- Ernest Lambrecht, with the bowling alley, was the son of German immigrants. The family appears to have lived at the address of his shop since before 1900.
- Joe P. Bausch, with the tavern, was the son of German immigrants. The family lived two blocks from his bar in 1940.
- Lavona Raymond, with the bar, was the granddaughter of a German immigrant. Her father was an attorney and the family had moved to Milwaukee from Minnesota.
- Joseph Strumberger, the barber, was another Hungarian immigrant. He'd lived at and operated his barber shop on Fond du Lac since at least the 1920s.
- Lester J. Fieldhack, the electrical contractor, was the son of German immigrants. He lived at the same address as his shop.
- Gustave Larson, the refrigeration man, had moved to Milwaukee from Ashland. He was an immigrant from Sweden.

Merchant family profile (early 20th century)

Information from census and other public records

The Eisenstadts

In the 1944/1945 *Milwaukee City Directory*, Samuel Eisenstadt is listed as the proprietor of a men's furnishings shop at 2138 West Fond du Lac Avenue, and Miriam Eisenstadt is listed as the proprietor of a cap factory at the same address. According to census records, Miriam was the daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Eisenstadt.

Samuel and Elizabeth were Jewish immigrants from Russia. They had arrived in the United States in 1913 and Yiddish remained the language they spoke at home for decades. In 1918, Miriam was born, and son Ervin followed in 1920.

While Russian Jews typically left Russia in response to pogroms or other forms of intimidation, and rarely came to the U.S. with significant capital, most worked hard and quickly took advantage of opportunities available in America—particularly in the commercial sector. This was surely true of the Eisenstadts. By 1920, the family was living on Galena and had already opened a hat factory. They moved to North 8th Street by 1930, where they had purchased a home for \$7,000, a considerable fortune for the time. It appears that they may have sold the home in order to expand their business and send both children to college. By 1940, they had rented the building on Fond du Lac, and also lived at that address. Miriam had just completed four years of college in social work, and Ervin was in his first year of college. The same year, Samuel reported no income from his business. He had apparently taken a business loss.

However, by 1945/1946, the Eisenstadts had not one, but two enterprises operating out of the Fond du Lac Avenue location. Samuel had given the cap factory over to his daughter and he had opened the men's furnishings store. Given that Miriam had no doubt planned a career in social work, the family's plan was probably to bring Ervin into the family business. However, he died at the young age of 24, cause unknown. *(To the right is his high school photo from the North Division 1937 yearbook from Ancestry.com.)*

Ervin was buried at Spring Hill Cemetery in Milwaukee in 1944. Elizabeth and Samuel followed him in death in 1960 and 1984 respectively after retiring in Miami, Florida. Both were also both buried at Spring Hill. No records were found on Miriam after 1944/1945.



By the middle of the 20th century, many of the children of the early residents were buying lots in newer neighborhoods to the west and north of the Park West area. 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 Park West. They began migrating to the Park West neighborhood and surrounding areas in the 1960s. Many also took jobs at A.O. Smith.

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 Park West.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, Park West/Amani has over 6,500 residents. The densest population area is in the northeastern section, north of Locust. The largest ethnic group in the Park West/Amani neighborhood is African American (over 9 in 10), with a scattering of Germans, English, indigenous Africans, Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, South Americans, Hmong/Lao, Thai, and people of multiple ancestry in the area.

The median household income in Park West/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 administration, production, and healthcare support. Over two times as many residents are in the healthcare support field than the proportions in other Milwaukee areas.

Although residents in Park West/Amani are relatively low income, they have developed one of the most successful farmers markets in the Greater Milwaukee area. Fondy Farmers Market attracts consumers of farm to table products from all over Milwaukee and the suburbs. In addition, residents 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, Safe & Sound, Children’s Outing Association--Goldin, Children’s Hospital, 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; an early childhood education center; block cleanups; and family fun nights.

NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

- **Wisconsin Black Historical Society**, at 2620 W. Center, a non-profit providing educational opportunities, historical exhibits, and seasonal programs.
- **Fondy Farmers Market**, at 2220 W. Fond du Lac, one of Greater Milwaukee’s largest farmers markets, with fresh produce, arts/crafts, baked goods, and special 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.

KWANZAA			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Dec.	Wisconsin Black Historical Center, 2620 W. Center St.	An African-American cultural festival held from December 26 to January 1.	Free

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

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 Park West/Amani and have an uplifting comment to make about this neighborhood, send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Wisconsin Black Historical Society buildings

Todays neighborhood-Fondy Farmers Market



Todays neighborhood-
Bethel Baptist Church 24th & North Ave.



Todays neighborhood-
Emmaus Lutheran Church



Today's neighborhood-
25th & Center St.



Today's neighborhood-Businesses on 27th & Fond du Lac.

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 PHOTO FROM RESIDENTS



Local community gardening. Shoots 'n Roots program of the late 1970s, early 1980s.
(Photo courtesy of Dennis Lukaszewski of the University Extension.)