

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Capitol D; S-W. Lisbon Ave;
E-N. 84th St; W-N. 92nd St

NORTHWEST SIDE *St. Aemilian's*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

St. Aemilian's is neighborhood of moderate population density that is dominated by one-story Cape Cods and a few Tudor-style houses throughout the neighborhood. The streets generally follow a rectangular grid pattern except for Lisbon Avenue that runs at a diagonal and defines the southern border of St. Aemilian's.

The neighborhood's topography is hilly with a few fairly steep inclines. There is no public green space in St. Aemilian's. What green space there is surrounds the St. Aemilian/Lakeside complex (now known as SaintA's).

The main business corridor in St. Aemilian's is along Lisbon Ave and there are also a few businesses along Capitol Drive on the northern border of the neighborhood.

HISTORY

St. Aemilian's, as a neighborhood, developed around a group of Catholic institutions. One of these, SaintA's (formerly St. Aemilian/Lakeside) gave the neighborhood its name.

Early populations

Before the arrival of the Catholic institutions, St. Aemilian's southern boundary did have a scattering of very early settlers. The arterial at St. Aemilian's southern border, Lisbon Avenue, began as a plank road in the 1850s. Named for its destination, Lisbon Avenue connected Milwaukee to the town of Lisbon. Small hamlets of mainly German farmers grew up along this road--then part of the unincorporated Town of Wauwatosa. (The Town of Wauwatosa's boundaries were 27th Street to 124th and Greenfield to Hampton Avenues.)

The first of the Catholic institutions, St. Aemilian's Orphan Asylum, purchased land in the neighborhood in 1937. Nearly a century earlier, in 1849, Milwaukee bishop John Martin Henni established the orphanage on Jackson Street to provide care for children during a cholera epidemic. In 1854, a new facility accepting boys only was built in St. Francis. This facility was destroyed by fire in 1930, forcing the orphanage to move to a temporary location. In 1937, St. Aemilian's acquired a 37-acre site at 8901 West Capitol Drive to become the permanent facility, but this was not built until the 1950s.

The St. Aemilian's area did not draw residents in earnest until long after World War II, and these again tended to be Germans migrating west from Milwaukee's northside neighborhoods. By 1940, most of the area's roads had been constructed, but there were only 23 residences and 5 businesses within the neighborhood's current boundaries. Most of the homes were on North 86th, 87th and 92nd Streets.

The following page profiles one of these early families.



St. Aemilian's family (1930s)

*Name selected randomly from the 1940 City Directory in St. Aemilian's
(photo and other information found in public records on Ancestry.com)*

The Hagedorns

Sometime before 1930, the Hagedorns moved to 3903 North 92nd Street in today's St. Aemilian's neighborhood. At the time, the address was still in the unincorporated Town of Wauwatosa. Frank, the father, was the grandson of Bavarian and Prussian immigrants, and Henrietta (nee Diezel), the mother, was a Bavarian immigrant. Their house (apparently a duplex) was valued at \$11,000 in 1930, more than twice the median home value for the times. Frank was the sales manager of a wholesale plumbing company. The couple had a son, Harvey J. Hagedorn, who was born in 1908.

Frank died in 1932. Henrietta managed to hang on to her house. By 1940, the value of the home had greatly declined (an effect of the lingering Great Depression). She was no doubt helped by renting the second unit in her home. By 1940, the flat was rented by son Harvey, who was working as a dry goods salesman, and his new wife Loraine (nee Zimmerman). Harvey and Loraine were paying only \$23.00 a month in rent, slightly lower than the \$32.83 median rent for 1940.

Henrietta died in 1957 and joined her husband at Wisconsin Memorial Park Cemetery. It is not known if Harvey was able to maintain the large house. At one point he remarried a Marie Johnson. There is no evidence that he had children with either of his wives. Harvey died very young, at age 54, cause unknown. His funeral was at Rutter Funeral Home on North Avenue, and he joined his parents at Wisconsin Memorial Park (see photo from Ancestry.com).



The arrival of the Catholic institutions

St. Aemilian's. In the early 1950s, St. Aemilian's Orphan Asylum began building on its 37-acre lot on 89th and Capitol Drive. However, by the 1960s, the number of orphans at the facility had declined and the institution's focus shifted to treating emotionally-disturbed children. The Milwaukee Archdiocese ran St. Aemilian's until the late 1960s, when it was re-incorporated as St. Aemilian Child Care Center, a non-sectarian, non-profit residential and day treatment center. In 1989, St. Aemilian merged with Lakeside Children's Center to increase services. And in 2014, St. Aemilian/Lakeside merged with its child welfare subsidiary—Integrated Family Services—to create Saint A—still in the St. Aemilian's neighborhood.

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church and School. About the time that the St. Aemilian campus had been completed, St. Margaret Mary Catholic Parish moved to the neighborhood. The parish, named after St. Margaret Mary Alocque (1647-1690), who'd reported experiencing four visions of Jesus Christ, was established by Archbishop Albert G. Meyer in 1955 and began under the leadership of Father Raymond Vint. The parish was temporarily located in nearby Divine Savior High School until the church was completed at 3950 North 92nd Street in April 1957. By 1959, the St. Margaret Mary School was opened for grades one through five and by 1962 the school included all eight grades.

St. Anne's Salvatorian Campus. St. Anne's, named after the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus Christ, was established as a Catholic elderly care facility in 1876 by the Little Sisters of the Poor. In 1967, the facility moved to today's St. Aemilian's neighborhood at 3800 North 92nd Street. The complex has an assisted living apartment complex, an enhanced assisted living residential facility, and offers memory care and short-term rehab. Sponsorship was transferred to the Sisters of the Divine Savior in 1992. Today, St. Anne's Salvatorian Campus is the oldest Catholic elderly care facility in the Milwaukee Archdiocese, and is a 501c3 non-profit.

Businesses in St. Aemilian's

In 1940, West Lisbon Avenue, within the boundaries of the present St. Aemilian's neighborhood, had exactly two businesses. However, the post-World War II housing boom brought in large numbers of new residents to the area and with them came businesses. And as in most Milwaukee neighborhoods, the shopkeepers proved to be more diverse than the residents on the surrounding blocks. Lisbon, on the neighborhood's southern boundary, was and continues to be the largest commercial corridor in St. Aemilian's. Below is a list of businesses on Lisbon in 1960 (see summary that follows).

<i>Addresses on W. Lisbon Ave. in 1960</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, apartments, and organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
8401	Knueppel Pharmacy
8405	Lehnen Furniture Inc.
8407	James Stefanick Bookkeeping and Tax Service Roloff Engineering Company Standard Supply Company Harold E. Kerr Osteopath Standard Electric Company
8408	West-Eng (End?) Laundromat Self-Serve
8409	GBC Sales & Service
8411	Sur TV Sales & Service
8412	Periodical Publishers Inc.
8416	Mister Charles Beauty Shop Guaranteed Cutlery Products
8418	Hickman & Company Brokers

<i>Addresses on W. Lisbon Ave. in 1960</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, apartments, and organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
8424	George's Income Tax Service
8426	Erik's Studio Upholstery
8428	Industrial Products Engineering Company Manufacturers Agency
8432	Karl Teibse Barber
8434	Apartments
8436	AAA Insulation Contractors AAA Heating AAA Merchandise Mart Inc.
8510	Tony Linz Beer Depot
8520	Carpet City Corporation
8522	McCotter & Sons Manufacturing Agents Refractory Service Inc. Contractors Kenzler Engineering Company Consultants
8524	Pete's Home Bakery
8532	Wenzler's Market & Meats
8712	Thelen's Service Station
8718	Lisbon Drive-In Restaurant
8750	Custom Electronics Radio Repair
8801	Aldersgate Methodist Church
8814	Engine House No. 22
9111	Rick's Dairy and Dairy
9121	Carl Cattant Contractor
9131	Ward I. Rosenheimer Lawyer

Summary notes from the U.S. Census and other records:

- Technically, only the businesses on the northern side of the street (even numbers) were in the St. Aemilian's neighborhood. The others were in the Kops Park neighborhood.
- Most of the neighborhood's needs were served in 1960 with the food stores (grocery, butcher, deli, baker), barber, pharmacy, and laundromat.

- Very little definitive information could be found on the individual shopkeepers, as the last U.S. Census available for public access was 1940 when most of the shopkeepers would have been children.
- The Aldersgate Methodist Church is still in operation at the address. Sur TV appears to have moved several blocks east.
- Carpet City no longer has a Milwaukee store.
- David M. Brazner, the dentist, was born in PA, the son of Russian immigrants (possibly Jewish).
- The McCotter family was likely Irish or Scottish.
- Carl Cattant, the contractor, may have been the son of Carlo Cattant, an immigrant from Italy.

The arrival of African Americans

In the second half of the 20th century African Americans began to migrate to St. Aemilian's and surrounding neighborhoods. This happened for two reasons: (1) the need for housing following the razing of over 8,000 homes in the African American Bronzeville community in the late 1950s through the mid-1960s (see [Halyard Park neighborhood](#)), and (2) the availability of family-supporting jobs in Milwaukee's northwest side communities. As in most German-dominated areas in Milwaukee, the integration of the new population proceeded relatively smoothly, particularly after the passage of the national fair housing law and the Milwaukee fair housing law in 1968. Many African American families were able to purchase homes and move into the middle class.

Unfortunately, the deindustrialization movement that began in the 1980s arrested this course. Manufacturing employment in Milwaukee fell 77 percent, from a peak in 1963 to the present. What had been a working-and middle-class area on the Northwest Side was in economic decline.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, approximately 7 in 10 of St. Aemilian's 1,762 residents are European Americans, and, of these, the majority still claim German ancestry. Over 2 in 10 residents are African Americans, and approximately 1 in 20 Latinos. The remaining residents are a scattering of Asians, American Indians, and people of multiple backgrounds.

Median household income for residents was just over \$40,000. Education, sales, and production were listed by residents as the main occupations in the area.

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.

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

DINEEN PARK GOLF COURSE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Warm weather months	Dineen Park, 6901 W. Vienna St.	1 course, 18 holes	Contact Milw. County Parks

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION

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

FREE FAMILY SWIM—WASHINGTON HS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Tue.'s 6:00-6:55pm females; 7:00-7:55pm males	Washington H.S., 2525 N. Sherman Blvd., enter main gym door on Sherman Blvd.	Indoor swimming with swim caps available for purchase (children 7 and under must be accompanied by adult). 875-6025.	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

“I grew up on 92nd St about 0.5 block south of Lisbon Ave in the 1950’s and 1960’s and attended St Margaret Mary School in the first graduating 8th grade class. I remember that I started in 2nd grade and each year the school started teaching the next grade up until we graduated 8th grade and all 8 grades were being taught. The principal was Sr Margaret Ann and was a tall and strict disciplinarian.

For the 1st grade, I was sent to St Pius X grade school on 76th St in Wauwatosa as the St Margaret Mary School was not opened yet. I recall the masses first at Divine Savior for a short time and then moving the masses to the new St Margaret Mary parish building that was planned to eventually be the gymnasium after the present day church was built much later. Fr Raymond Vint was the pastor from the start and was totally dedicated to building the parish without incurring debt. Fr Vint was also a chaplain during World War 2 and also a chaplain for the Army National Guard from which he retired after a long career.

I remember Sangor Pharmacy on the corner of 92nd and Lisbon and the owner, Joey Sanger, a former featherweight boxing champion. I remember he had a small cubicle in the center of the pharmacy where he could watch everything that went on in the store. His chair was elevated a step or two above the floor level and his cubicle was filled with old yellow newspaper clippings of his career in boxing.”

—Thomas Klopff

If you are a resident of Yankee Hill and have an interesting observation about this neighborhood, send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Todays neighborhood-
St. Matthew Lutheran Church



Todays neighborhood-
Businesses on Lisbon Ave.



Todays neighborhood-
Houses on 86th & Vienna



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 87th & Melvina



Today's neighborhood-St. Aemilians at 89th & Capitol

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