

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Seeboth St (partial) Menomonee River; **S**-W. Greenfield Ave;
E-S. First St; **W**-S. Cesar Chavez Dr/S. 16th St

SOUTH SIDE *Walker's Point*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Walker's Point has some of the oldest homes in Milwaukee. Many houses date from the 1800s and are built in the Greek revival, Federal, and Italianate styles popular in the middle of the 19th century. There are a large number of 19th century commercial buildings as well. Most of them are on National Avenue, the main business district. In addition, the neighborhood has a number of antique stores, trendy new restaurants around South 2nd Street, and new condos on South 1st Street. The most recognizable feature in the area is the Allen-Bradley Clock Tower, part of the Rockwell Automation plant in the southeastern section of Walker's Point. The neighborhood has over 100 times more cafes than Milwaukee generally, and nearly twice the number of churches.

There is green space in Walker's Point. Walker's Square is a small park in the neighborhood located directly across from the United Community Center. See neighborhood photos below.

Today's neighborhood-
Businesses on National Ave.



HISTORY

Walker's Point is Milwaukee's last relatively intact neighborhood. It had its beginnings in the 1830s.

Early populations

Walker's Point was named after George Walker, one of three founding land developers in Milwaukee (the other two being Solomon Juneau and Byron Kilbourn). Walker settled on the shores of Lake Michigan in 1834 in the area that would later become Milwaukee's South Side and began developing the land. A careless businessman, Walker had his claim jumped a year later by speculators from Green Bay. He finally secured a clear title to the land seven years later and began to sell lots.

The first areas to be developed were around today's South 3rd Street (then Hanover) and South 2nd Street (then Reed). South 2nd became an early commercial corridor and South 3rd attracted many wealthy settlers. Some of their mansions still stand today (see photos). The earliest residents were a mix of Yankees, Czechs, Germans, and Irish. They built their own churches on the blocks that today comprise Walker's Point.

Jobs were plentiful as Walker's Point developed. Milwaukee became known as "the machine shop of the world," and many contributing industries were located on Milwaukee's Near South Side. These included Chain Belt, Kearney and Trecker, Allis Chalmers, A.O. Smith, and later Allen-Bradley.

The diverse industries of Walker's Point attracted new populations. By the middle of the 1800s Norwegians were arriving and taking up maritime jobs on the eastern end of Walker's Point. In 1858 they built Our Savior's Lutheran Church on South 9th Street and Scott and settled around the parish.

By the turn of the century the neighborhood was becoming increasingly diverse. Immigrants arrived from Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and some were still coming in from Germany and Ireland. A Greek community settled around South 6th Street and National, where they met for coffee with compatriots of the same village in Greece to talk, exchange gossip, share religious and political ideologies, and play cards or games.

Early businesses in Walker's Point

By the 1920s Walker's Point was the most diverse neighborhood in Milwaukee. The following chart shows the businesses and organizations that were on West National Avenue between today's South 1st Street and South 6th Street in 1922 (this is before the addressing system was changed after 1932). See the notes following the chart.

<i>Addresses on W. National in 1922</i>	<i>Name of business or organization</i>
220	Standard Oil Company Filling Station
235	Peter Becker Soft Drinks
251	Herman Engineering
277-79	Stoltz & Wright Motor Trucks
282	Matthew Setina Tailor
284	Radtke & Dhein Horseshoers
286	Harry G. Roberts Coal
288	August Wesell Shoe Repair
290	John Meyer Restaurant
	<i>Cross Street: Reed Street (today's 2nd Street)</i>
309	Auston Nabby Barber
312	Martin Jug Shoes
313	Englne Company #19
314	William F. Adams Plumber
315	C.F. Eckhart & Company Doll Manufacturing
323	Joseph Lewis Physician
	<i>Cross Street: Hanover Street (today's 3rd Street)</i>
349	Brown & Rehbaum Inc. Commercial Photographers
351	William C. Saunders Photography Carol Saunders Music Teacher William E. Brown Photographer
353	Theodore Mueller Real Estate Security Loan Building Lawrence N. Conlan Lawyer Joseph F. Schoendorf Lawyer

<i>Addresses on W. National in 1922</i>	<i>Name of business or organization</i>
355	F.J. Wilson & Saveland Coal
357	Paul Detic Hat Cleaner
	<i>Cross Street: Greenbush Street (today's 4th Street)</i>
363	Hans A. Reinhard Physician Anna Reinhard Novelties
367	Samuel Gofas Hat Cleaner
369	William Topitges Grocery
373	Thomas Reynolds Grocery
374	Marshall & Ilsley Bank, South Side Division
375	W.J. Root Furs
377	Office Building Fred W. Druse Dentist Arthur R.F. Grob Physician Gilvert F. Keller Dentist Sylvester Leggatt Dentist Emil A. Nelson Dentist Julius W. Schultz Dentist Waters & Waters Real Estate National Engineering Company Huga P. Siekert Physician
378	W.H. Shenners Company Real Estate Camillis E. Richards Physician
	<i>Cross Street: Grove Street (today's 5th Street)</i>
392	Henry J. Oberst Jeweler
394	Stephen Sawek Soft Drinks
396	Charles R. Farnhan Physician Chester R. Rumsey Dentist Lee S. Rumsey Dentist Groeling & Patrick Artists National Engraving Company Speir & Spheeris Cigar Manufacturers
398	Samuel H. Krasno Dry Goods
400	Nighbor & Slesch Billiards
402	Joseph Dornoff Restaurant
404	Morris D. Collen Clothing
409	Theodore Levy Dry Goods

<i>Addresses on W. National in 1922</i>	<i>Name of business or organization</i>
412	Edwin & Frantz Dentists Isaac O Newell Physician Grandinjan & Krizan Photography
413	Waukegan Tea Company
414	Abraham Rabinowitz Meats
416	Caroline Wepher Fruits Mrs. Matha Winkler Dressmaker
417	F.W. Woolworth's Nations
418	E.J. Shinner & Company Meats Sam Wah Restaurant
420	Frank Medved Soft Drinks
	<i>Cross Street: First Avenue (today's 6th Street)</i>

Summary and notes (from census and other records):

- The street is a good example of the changing times in 1922. Prohibition had just started. The street had "soft drink" bars, filling stations, a trucking firm, and horseshoers.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had high school educations.
- Most of the business owners were immigrants and seem to have started their businesses with very little capital. This is before the Immigration Act of 1924 which put quotas on immigration.
- Peter Becker was a German immigrant who was widowed early. His "soft drink" place was listed as a "saloon" before the national prohibition law was passed in 1920. He lived at the same address as his business.
- Matthew Setina, the tailor at 282 W. National, and his wife Mary were Slovenians who had been living in Germany prior to immigrating to the United States. The family resided one block west of the shop and spoke Slovenian at home. See more on the Slovenians below.
- August Wesell, with the shoe repair shop at 288 W. National, was a young man living with his brother-in-law on 16th Street in the early 1920s. His parents were German immigrants.
- Martin Jug, with the shoe store at 312 W. National, was an Austrian immigrant. He lived in a rooming house on National with another young man from Austria.
- William Saunders, the photographer, was a widowed, elderly man and the son of English and Canadian immigrants. His daughter had the novelty shop in his building. She was only 19 at the time.
- Paul Detic, the hat cleaner, was an immigrant from Croatia. He lived in a lower flat in the next block on National.
- The other hat cleaner, Samuel Gofas, was a Greek immigrant.

- William Topitges (Topatzes), with the grocery store, was also from Greece. He and his large extended family lived just up the street from his store, on National.
- Samuel Krasno, with the dry good store, was a Russian immigrant (probably Jewish). He was only 23 in 1922.
- Grandinjan & Krizan appear to have been Croatian immigrants.
- The Medved family, with the “soft drink” establishment on National, had multiple taverns and soft drink bars in Milwaukee. Louis Medved had a tavern in the Bronzeville area in the 1930s and 1940s.

Throughout its history, Walker’s Point became the home base to a variety of immigrating and migrating communities. And many of these groups spawned their own leadership in the neighborhood.

The Slovenian community

By the turn of the 20th century, a Slovenian community had established itself in Walker’s Point. Most lived near South 6th and National Avenue or near South 9th and Mineral Streets. They opened a number of social clubs near the former location, including South Side Turn Hall, Llidia Hall and Harmonie Hall. From this environment emerged one very high profile Slovene. See his profile below.

Spotlight on Walker’s Point resident (1920s)

(Photos and other information found on public records at Ancestry.com and other public records)

Louis G. Bashell, “Milwaukee’s Polka King”

Louis (“Louie”) Bashell was raised in the Walker’s Point neighborhood. He was born on July, 1, 1914 while his family was living on Bruce Street (then Park Place). His parents, Joe and Antonia Bashell (nee Samsa), were Slovenian immigrants. Louie took up the accordion at age 7 and began playing it at his parents’ tavern in the neighborhood—a practice he

continued for 50 years. As a teen, he honed his skills in the music program of Boy’s Tech High School (*photo to left is him returning to the school for an event covered in the yearbook, from Ancestry.com*). His musical genre was the polka--Slovenian style. The Bashell family later moved to 13th and Walker, again in the neighborhood.

Bashell’s acclaimed professional career began in the Walker’s Point neighborhood and reached its heights after he and his wife, Stephine A. Starich, moved to the Jackson Park neighborhood at 5521 W. Jackson Park Drive. While living in Walker’s Point, he formed a trio with himself, a drummer, and a saxophone player. Later, in the 1940s, Bashell formed a 5-piece band. One of their recordings, the Slovenian folk song, "Zidana

Marela," ("Silk Umbrella"), sold out as fast as the band could make the records. This resulted in a contract with RCA Victor.



Bashell remained a Wisconsinite and a family man throughout his career. When RCA wanted Bashell to promote the records on a lengthy national tour, he refused, insisting that he wanted to be close to his wife and children, Robert, Linda, Diane, and Deborah. He continued to focus his career on the local scene, becoming known as “Milwaukee’s Polka King.”

While living in the Jackson Park neighborhood, and later in Greendale, he received numerous awards. These included six nominations for polka awards by the Wisconsin Area Music Industry, an induction into the Wisconsin Polka Hall of Fame, and a lifetime achievement award from the National Cleveland Style Polka Hall of Fame. His most significant award was when he became Wisconsin’s first resident to receive a National Heritage Fellowship grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, becoming a National Heritage Fellow.

Having conducted his own polka band for more than seven decades, Bushell died of complications from pneumonia in 2008. He was interred at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Milwaukee.

The Latino community

If Walker’s Point was not diverse enough, it would soon become more so with the arrival of the Latinos. A number of push-pull factors influenced the population changes. During the early 1900s Mexican immigration to the United States expanded because of worsening economic conditions in Mexico. A large wave of Mexicans also left the country during the political and economic turmoil created by the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Although most Mexicans found jobs in local tanneries and foundries, some came to Milwaukee as strikebreakers—often unknowingly. The Walker’s Point Latino settlement was due largely to the recruitment of Mexicans by the Pfister & Vogel tannery on 6th Street. The earliest arriving Latinos to the area were known as Los Primeros. See a profile of one below.

Spotlight on Walker’s Point resident (1920s)

(Photos and other information found on public records at Ancestry.com and other public records)

Federico Herrera

Federico Herrera arrived in Milwaukee in 1927 as a 22-year-old immigrant from El Oro, Mexico. Just before arriving in Walker’s Point, he’d played baseball in Texas for the owners of Mexico’s Dos Estrella’s mines.

Herrera soon established himself with the newly arriving Latinos in Walker’s Point and began seeking ways to fill their needs. In just a few years he co-founded Milwaukee’s first Spanish-language newspapers, *Sancho Panza* and *Boletin Informativo*, with Miguel Sevilla Chavez and Jesus C. Perez. The trio also founded Circulo Social de Amigos “Emilio Carranza,” that commemorated the first Mexican to fly a plane between Mexico City and Washington D.C.

Federico married Sophia and became a naturalized citizen in 1934 (*see his photo on his naturalization papers from Ancestry.com*). He and his family later moved to the Silver City neighborhood at 939 South 32nd Street. He died in 1992 and was buried at St. Adalbert’s Cemetery.



With the establishment of their own newspapers, Los Primeros founded the Mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe on South 5th Street. In a few years, other Mexicans began joining them, migrating from the Southwest. A parallel migration occurred in the 1940s when Puerto Ricans began to settle in Walker's Point.

The long Latino presence in Milwaukee is celebrated at the United Community Center in the neighborhood, with its plethora of social programs, arts, housing units, café, and enrichment classes. A pedestrian can also learn the history of Latinos in Milwaukee by observing photos, artwork, exhibitions inside the center, and murals on the outer walls of the Bruce-Guadalupe Community School (see photos below).

Wisconsin Indian Community

Before there was a Milwaukee, members of the Ojibwa, Oneida, Ho Chunk, Potawatomi, and Stockbridge-Munsee nations had settled in Southeastern Wisconsin. But several hundred years of European encroachment on the land and treaties broken by the American government resulted in the removal of these nations to reserved parcels of land far away from the Milwaukee area.

However, by the 1930s, there were faint signs of a return, and most of the early- arrivals were moving into the Walker's Point area. Among others, two major families-- the Ojibwe Porters and the Oneida Steffes--had settled in the neighborhood prior to 1940. Doris, Shirley, and Delores Steffe grew up to become members of the Consolidated Tribes of American Indians dance group that performed at hundreds of public and private events throughout its history. The Porters would also go on to leadership positions (see the profile of Del Porter on the following page).

But it would be in the 1950s that Walker's Point would see the largest influx of Natives into the area. Once the Wisconsin Indians were moved onto reservations, the United States government engaged in a number of policies basically to de-Indianize the Native population and assimilate them to European American society. One policy, called the Voluntary Relocation Program, was designed to move Indians off the reservation into cities. When the Native people arrived in Milwaukee from the rural settlements, few had the needed skills or support systems to thrive in an urban environment. And fewer yet received help from the relocation offices. Sometimes the offices were not even staffed. The result was that local taverns often served as the only community gathering places.

Making a community

Some of these "Indian bars" were located in Walker's Point. One of the taverns, Danford's Bar-- informally "Indian John's"--was located at South 5th and Bruce. Operated by John A. and Nancy Danforth (Oneidas), the tavern served as a community gathering place where migrants could locate their relatives, sign up for mail, and find housing. Another of these Indian bars was the Thunderbird Tap near South 15th and Muskego. Run by non-drinker, Coleman Schwamp, the bar sponsored all-Indian athletic teams. Schwamp's wife, Emily, was a certified Oneida language teacher. The Oneida Schwamps would also refer problem drinkers to places where they could get help.

One of the places where the Schwamps may have referred problem drinkers was the United Indians of Milwaukee center, also in the Walker's Point neighborhood. Located at 1554 W. Bruce Street, the center not only held Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, but offered elderly lunch programs, bingo, pool tables, youth activities, card games, basketball, and Indian dance and craft activities. Over its tenure, the center provided outlets for elderly tribal members to get together to continue and pass on traditions associated with dance, singing, and the protocol of the drum.

See the profile of the Porter family below.

ADVERTISEMENT

Announcing
Milwaukee's ethnic guide

A literal stroll through neighborhoods where Milwaukee's ethnic groups settled

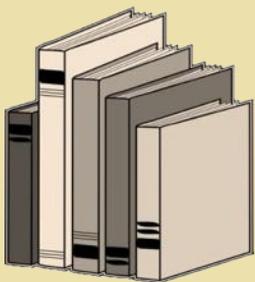
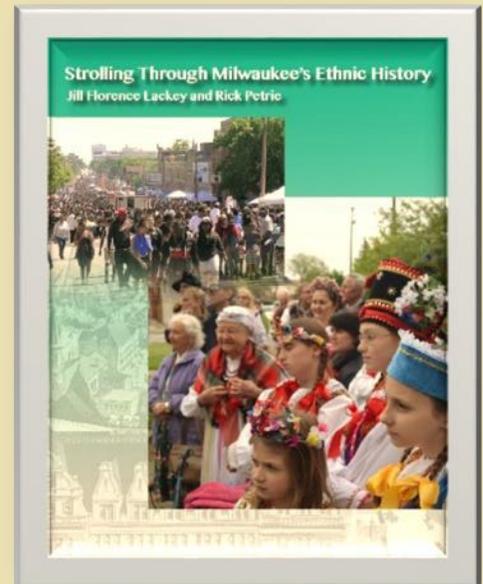
Dr. Jill Florence Lackey and Rick Petrie

Strolling through Milwaukee's Ethnic History

Chapters taking place in Lincoln Village, Walker's Point, Third Ward, Halyard Park, East Town, Lake Park, Jones Island, West Town, Riverwest

An "up close and personal" look at local ethnic life by directing readers to the neighborhoods and venues where the groups left their marks. *Strolling* brings readers directly into their experiences, whether it involves ambling through the environments they built or participating in contemporary ethnic activities.

Ethnic groups covered: Milwaukee Germans, Irish, African Americans, Italians, Mexicans, French, English, Norwegians, Jews, Hmong, North American Indians, Scots/Scots Irish, Czechs/Slovaks, Kashubes, Greeks, Puerto Ricans, and Burmese.



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"*Strolling through Milwaukee's Ethnic History* is an intriguing guide to the ethnic history in our midst and a colorful reminder that Milwaukee has always been a city of newcomers."
- John Gurda

Spotlight on Walker's Point resident (1930s)

(Photo and other information courtesy of Frank Porter; U.S. Census)

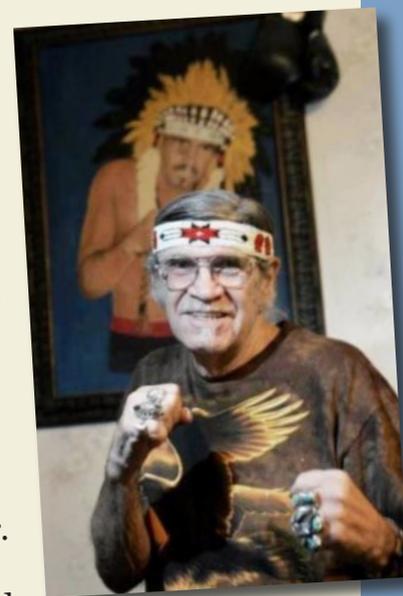
The Porters

On the year that Del D. Porter was born, his parents had just moved from Bay View to 211 South 3rd Street in the Walker's Point neighborhood. The family was Ojibwe from the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. Del's father, Delmar Teddy Porter (a.k.a. Cyclone) was a professional boxer, having won state Golden Gloves championships in his younger years. Del's mother, Lena Porter, was a homemaker.

As Del grew up he was tutored by his father. By the time he was out of his teens, Del had won multiple state Golden Gloves championships himself. But Del's biggest contribution to the local area was outside of the ring. In 1960, Del Porter opened the Ace Boxing Club to serve south side youth. The club trained them to box, but also taught them to respect their elders and gave the youth ways to become strong contributing citizens. The club had multiple locations until it found a permanent home in a pavilion in Kosciuszko Park in the Lincoln Village neighborhood (the pavilion is now named after Porter). From 1960 until his death from cancer in 2008, Del Porter worked days as a bus driver and evenings as a boxing trainer and social mentor to hundreds of young people. At no time did Del ever charge a fee for his services. In addition to his work with youth, Del Porter served in multiple leadership positions for Indian Summer.

Del married three times, first to Caroline Mary Barbara Cecot, second to Esther Florence (nee Shopofski) who died in 1988, and third to Diana (nee Burgard). He had 14 children.

Despite Del's death in 2008, Ace Boxing continued. Del's son Frank began to help Del manage the club during his last days. After Del's death, Frank Porter took over as club leader. In the tradition of his father, Frank supported himself with day jobs and never accepted a salary for his work with youth. Under Frank's leadership, community service activities have expanded, including block cleaning, helping the elderly, picnics and celebrations for local residents—and each year, a reverent ceremony that attracts scores of residents to honor his father—Del Porter, charismatic founder of Ace Boxing.



The preservationist influence

All the populations migrating in and out of Walker's Point over the generations left their marks on the architectural landscape. From the middle 1800s there were Italianate, Queen Anne, and Greek and Gothic Revival homes. From Victorian times there were the elegant storefronts on National, 2nd Street, and 3rd Street. With Urban Renewal and freeway building razing so many of Milwaukee's historic areas, some area activists wanted to preserve the neighborhoods that remained relatively intact. Much of this began in Walker's Point with the founding of the Historic Walker's Point organization in the early 1970s. Historic Walker's Point later became Historic Milwaukee Inc. In 1978 the area just east of the freeway became the first Milwaukee listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Scores of Walker's Point homes have been restored since the preservationist movement began in Milwaukee. New residents, intent on living in an urban setting in a historic neighborhood, have been purchasing the historic homes and starting businesses in the neighborhood. Trendy coffee shops and cafes have cropped up in unexpected places.

Today the populations that dominate Walker's Point include very few members of the early Greek, Slovenian, or Wisconsin Indian communities. But just over half the residents are of Mexican ancestry. In addition, approximately 1 in 10 claim Puerto Rican or German ancestry, and approximately 1 in 20 claim Polish or Irish ancestry. African Americans comprise just over 7 percent of the population. The largest number of occupations in Walker's Point are in the fields of administration, food service, and facilities (building/maintenance), with management close behind.

Despite its recent rise in status, Walker's Point is still a neighborhood of residents with modest means. Approximately half of the population lives in households that fall into the low income category (with annual incomes under \$25,000). Most of the rest live in lower middle income households (with annual incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000). The good news is that mortgages and rents are very affordable. Over half of home-owners spend between \$501 and \$1,000 on selected home-owner costs per month (e.g., mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, taxes, insurance). Most rental units cost between \$501 and \$1,000 a month.

Walker's Point has a very active and effectual neighborhood association.

INTERESTING FEATURES

- **Walker's Square**, a small park at 1039 South 9th Street, donated to the neighborhood by founder George Walker and used today for many community events including a farmers market (see photo).
- **Global Water Center**, at 247 W. Freshwater Way, with water-related research facilities for universities, existing water-related companies and accelerator space for new companies.
- **Arts-at-Large** at its new location in the old Patrick Cudahy Meat Market once at 420-422 Grove Street (now 5th), providing a wide range of creative programs for Milwaukee school children.
- **Walker's Point Center for the Arts**, at 839 South 5th Street, with a gallery accommodating 10 exhibitions each year and a wide range of educational program.
- **Lynde & Harry Bradley Technology and Trade School**, at 700 South 4th Street, continuing a tradition of teaching trade skills to young people since its days as Boy's Tech (see photo).
- **United Community Center**, at 1028 S. 9th (see outings and photos below).

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.

5TH STREET FEST			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Sep., Sat. 12-10pm	5th Street in Walker's Point	Music, food, games.	Free

WALKER'S SQUARE FARMERS MARKET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jun. thru Aug., Sun., Thu. 8am-5pm	1031 S. 9th St.	Fresh produce from Wisconsin farmers, baked goods, art, crafts.	Free

WALK THROUGH MILWAUKEE'S LATINO HISTORY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, 10-4pm	United Community Center, 1028 S. 9th St.	Opportunity to learn about Latino history by visiting tannery and foundry exhibits, photos, and art inside the UCC building, and historical murals on two sides of Bruce Guadalupe School next door.	Free

WALKER'S POINT CENTER FOR THE ARTS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Tue.-Sat. 12-5pm	839 S 5th St.	Ongoing exhibitions in a community setting.	Free to look

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--MITCHELL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4th, 9am-10pm	Mitchell Park, 2200 W. Pierce St.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, music, fireworks.	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

Quotes from 2002 oral history conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.¹— Remembering THEN:

“[Upon arriving in Walker’s Point] There had been artist studios, particularly three floors above Bern Brothers furniture store, which was crammed with artists. Where I went specifically was off of Florida, and that’s where there’s an insurance company. At the time that I first came to Walker’s Point it was to cohabit a floor in that complex. At that time there were still active parts of the complex (it’s a bunch of buildings). They had active tanning going on, leather tanning. And Sprecher Brewery was there, and Vanguard Foundry, and Iven’s Industrial Machinery. They bought and sold industrial machinery; in fact, they are still in Walker’s Point, on Bruce St.

There were five of us artists and Fred Vogel and Hans Moede owned the building. It was in rough shape. They gave us a five-year lease and fronted the money to renovate the floor. We were on the 5th floor, to make it habitable. Subsequently, 2nd floor artists went in and eventually by the end of the five years, they did not renew our lease because they could get more money from corporate offices. It has gone both ways in Walker's Point, but it's an example of where artists came in and did some improvements, and people saw the potential. I think another significant part of that is Milwaukee is one of the few cities that has a live-work ordinance for artists."

"Goodwill was my first recollection of Walker's Point. When I was less than ten years old my grandmother went with a friend all the way down here from where we lived in Butler, Wisconsin to shop there. It was open from 1924 to 1977. All those years. Going to Goodwill and showing me what she got was the first memory of Walker's Point that I have. Then when I was in about 8th grade I had a teacher named Cesar Ovea. He was a Mexican man that lived in Waukesha . . . he came down here, he even let us go from school. He had to leave Butler (that's 127th near Hampton Ave), come all the way down here, and that's before the freeway was up, to get a piñata, so he could have it for our class. That's another one of my first memories of Walker's Point."

"There were just tons and tons of different nationalities. But there was certainly a group of Slovenians who were able to trace back their memories. Also, some Greek, but not a lot. The Topitzes family was here forever. . . Memo Topitzes' family owned a little grocery store on National Ave. His brother was an active Socialist. He had a big family and that neighborhood store was where all of the kids from the high school went. He was born I believe in 1918... He was known as the Mayor of National Avenue. He knew everything that was going on in the neighborhood and was very old school. He kissed the ladies' hands, was a little flirt, and had great stories. People my age, I'm 69, who grew up in the area talked about going to Memo's store to buy candy raisins, which was the number one seller."

"Mexicans and Polish have very similar values and practices too. For example, I've been to a Mexican wedding where I would dance with the bride, and men would dance with the groom, and you do that and then give them a dollar. I have heard that rural Polish people do the same custom. And they had the Catholic Church between them, the Germans, the Slovenians, the Mexicans and the Puerto Ricans too. Religion united them very much."

"Now some people will say, 'Oh, Walker's Point, it's high end,' and it used to be the opposite as late as 1985 and almost '90. That's why I wanted you to know about the disinvestment, the 75 percent absentee landlords and poor people that couldn't afford to do anything with their homes if they wanted to."

"I know what happened when the Holy Trinity Church, the Mexican church, [that] started in the gymnasium of the 3rd floor of the Holy Trinity gymnasium. The pastor invited them to come and have their mass there in the summer of 1926 until they opened the first Mexican mission which is on 719 S. 5th or 313 Grove Street. As the Mexicans got larger in the group they moved to a telephone company office, now the Guadalupe Center, and the Guadeloupe Dental Clinic hangs out there too. That was in '46, then 20 years later Holy Trinity's Germans were almost down to nothing, the Germans and some Slovenians. There used to be another church that's Walker's Square, called St. John the Evangelist. They moved to Cold Spring Road and that hall, Parish Hall, the UCC started there, and now it's become amazingly huge. The church became more Spanish-speaking after the Slovenians died. I remember them. There were a few Germans left too when I was younger. I came to their church and we got married there in 1979. And I

began to go there very continuously, like I do now, in 1981. The remains of the Slovenians were still there at that time and some old Germans that had been at Holy Trinity in the '20s even. And since they died, it's become more Mexican."

"Well, actually it was probably a lot of blue collar, a number of professionals, and the homeless. We had, again, that diversity that was very attractive. It was the full gamut. From lawyers down to the homeless. There was a small contingent that worked in the neighborhood and that would be in service areas, and there were still the manufacturing plants. But I think the majority left the neighborhood."

"There was a place just kitty-corner from where I'm living called Coney Island and the guy that ran it--it was the saddest little hotdog and hamburger place you can possibly imagine. But the guy that ran it was a veteran of WW II and he kept it open because all these guys would go there in the morning, and he would give them a free hotdog and a cup of coffee."

"Our church was very much working for justice, we had an organization called CUFGA, Congregations United for Community Action. What the city had planned for this neighborhood was, it was all one neighborhood as far as 14th Street, and then the freeway was constructed and they felt it divided the neighborhood in half, so they made two out of one. They made Walker's Square because that's the market square that was donated by George Walker in 1837. It's probably the only market square left in the city. . . [and then] the city wanted to have the entire neighborhood be a light industrial zone. They were tearing down as many houses as they could to get light factories in here. One of the first things they did when we came here was to petition the city to try to stop that wholesale destruction of houses for industry. That's what the city wanted, so we had to have public hearings and then go to a public hearing in the City Hall and testify. The Alderman was Chris Drager, he would never go to any community group. . . Then we got Mary Anne McNulty and she was an activist. But we had to petition the city and get signatures, and my wife had a large map on which we tried to get signatures from the homeowners to say that they were willing to have it rezoned. Because the city did not want it to become what it is now. They wanted light manufacturing to the freeway, and after the freeway they wanted the homes. That was the city plan. It took a lot of effort by many people at our church to change that zoning. That's why they have the neighborhood now 'yuppified' --or not 'yuppified,' but more high-end people here. They would not have had it without the work that we did."

**Quotes from 2002 oral history conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.—
About NOW:**

"It has changed very much and a lot of it has to do with the work that we've been doing with the Walker's Point Association and with the City of Milwaukee. We worked very diligently, first of all, to get the city to give us Palfalvi Park for redevelopment. So Arts-at-Large has been redeveloping the park on 3rd and Walker. And we're going to be doing a lot more in the spring of this year to the park to make it even more exciting and usable for the neighborhood. So a lot of our work has gone into that in the neighborhood. And now we've purchased the old Patrick Cudahy building on the corner of Washington and 5th, and we're in the process of renovating that building for the community center. So we're making it a huge investment in the neighborhood. The changes in terms of 5th street, which we're on. Last summer they completely redid the street itself, widened the sidewalks to 17 1/2 feet and they're tree-scaping all the way up and down as well, and we're also very much involved in beautifying 5th street. We have coined the phrase 'Creative Corridor' or 'Corridor Creativo'."

“Even in the relatively short period I’ve been here there’s been substantial changes. We’ve had 5th St. redevelopment. Widening of the sidewalks to enable the restaurants and shops there to have outside tables. That’s changed. We’ve had new businesses come into the area. Just around the corner from Meraki and other restaurants. Then we’ve also had new apartment buildings or condominiums being erected too, converted from previous warehouses. So, it has changed.”

“Because of the nature of our work, our work is to bring people together from diverse cultures and diverse neighborhoods--so we see people getting along all the time. All of the work we do is around peacemaking and nonviolence. We’ve got Sikhs working with us. We work a lot with the Jewish Museum of Milwaukee. We work with multiple artists from multiple countries. And we have global mentors from around the world. So our work is centered in people getting along and helping people have conversations. We have really good experiences in our neighborhood.”

“We really love the live-work part of it. We want to see more jobs come back in the neighborhood and that mixture of living and being able to roll out of bed. Like, next door to us a lot of the ballerinas live there. They roll out of bed, and they go to work next door. That’s the way the neighborhood was in ‘88. People that worked at the tanneries just walked to work.”

“And a lot of dogs--millennials have dogs. It’s like, my god, how many dogs are there? I have two so I’m very dog friendly, but I was just like, wow, look at all these dogs. Which was not real evident when we first moved in, because we moved in with two dogs as well. But that’s a huge change that I’ve seen. Actually, a lot of the neighbors involved now in the neighborhood group are pushing for a dog park, so I’m not wrong in this. Actually 3rd Street has been designated a safe dog-walking area which is how we got an extra street light.”

“I do know there are different types of businesses moving into the neighborhood. We’ve got a landing spot with Saz’s as a major caterer here, they also have an event center. We have Bray Architects here and there’s other kinds of building and professional, and wedding services.”

“There’s lots of social services in Walker’s Point. The Hispanic Center is down here, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Health Clinic has an office down here. There was some social services focusing on victims of domestic abuse. Walker’s Point Youth and Family Centers for homeless young adults. Milwaukee Christian Center.”

“Arts-at-Large is a facilitator of that, so we contract with about 100 Milwaukee-based artists to do the work that we do. So, the nature of our business is to facilitate employment for artists, get them to understand how to work in education, and bring multiple artists across cultures and disciplines together to educate Milwaukee Public School students.”

“Las Posadas, you go to the three places and you ask in Spanish to get in. They would say like, ‘there’s no room in the inn,’ and then the third place, they invited you in. I used to go on Posadas; I used to go on Spanish speaking Posadas. And I learned how to say those songs in Spanish. It’s a Mexican custom.”

“Leaders. Definitely [names], which is funny because she's an architect that has a lot to do with Walker’s Point but she doesn't live here. But she is retired from her architectural firm but she is still involved. I’m sorry I’m not good with names, but the person that runs Arts-at-Large is a dynamo. The Walkers Point Business Association-- that group. But they are not grassroots, they are coming from the outside and investing. [Name] I mentioned is a major leader. UCC had a number of different directors that have been visionary.”

“I think the biggest things that’s absolutely impacting now because we have a very active community group, Voces Frontera, and they do organize a lot of gatherings and demonstrations and marches around the immigrations policies that are current.”

¹ Urban Anthropology Inc. complies with human subjects requirements of formal research and asks informants to sign informed consent forms that stipulate anonymity, hence names are not provided with the quotes.

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-
Houses on Pierce & 3rd St.



Today's neighborhood-Lynde & Harry Bradley Technology and Trade School

Today's neighborhood-Antique Store on National Ave.

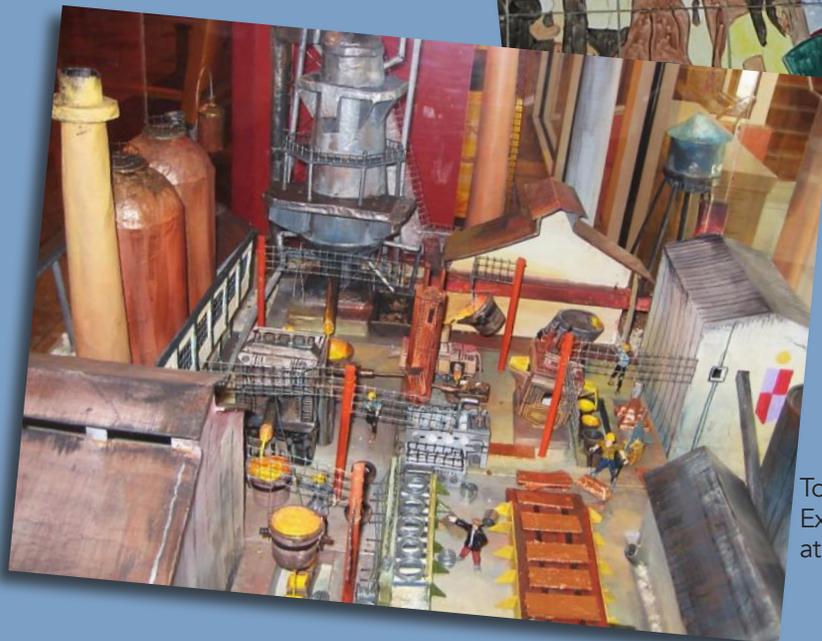
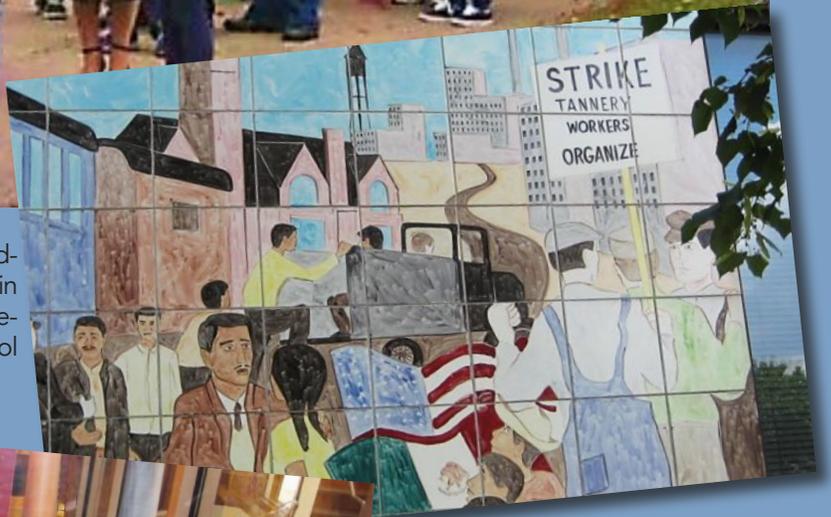


Today's neighborhood-Houses on Walker & 3rd St.

Today's neighborhood-Day of the Dead celebration at Walker's Square Park



Today's neighborhood-Murals of the history of Latinos in Milwaukee on outer wall of Bruce-Guadalupe Community School



Today's neighborhood-Exhibit of working life of los primeros at the United Community 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*.

Also see Antonio J. Doxtator's and Renee J. Zakhar's, *American Indians in Milwaukee*.

Also see Joseph A. Rodriguez' and Walter Sava's, *Latinos in Milwaukee*.

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:

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OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS



Local community gardening. Image from the 1930s.
(Photos courtesy of Dennis Lukaszewski of the University Extension.)