

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. North Ave; S-W. Vliet St;
E-N. 35th St; W-N. 47th St

WEST SIDE *Washington Park*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Washington Park is a chiefly residential neighborhood with high population density. The most common housing type is the older duplex built in the early 20th century followed by a number of Queen Anne houses that date from the late 19th century. The streets mainly follow a rectangular grid pattern except for West Lisbon Avenue that runs at a diagonal from North 47th Street at the western edge of the neighborhood to North 35th on the eastern side. The principal business corridors are along West Lisbon Avenue and West Vliet Street.

Washington Park's topography is flat to gently rolling hills. At the southwest corner of the neighborhood is the epic, 128-acre park of the same name, Washington Park. See neighborhood photos below.

HISTORY

The neighborhood of Washington Park was named after its park. In 1891, the Milwaukee Park Commission purchased 124 acres of land to develop West Park—Washington Park's original name. The Park Commission Board engaged Frederick Law Olmsted & Company to design and plan the park. Olmsted was known for designing New York City's Central Park and later planned and designed Milwaukee's Lake Park.

Early populations

The European history of the Washington Park neighborhood begins with Germans. Before there was a park, and long before the city annexed the current Washington Park area, the region had attracted a few settlers. In the mid- to late 1800s, a handful of well-heeled Germans began using the area for their country estates. Three of these were Franz Joseph Uhrig, Ludwig von Baumbach, and Frederick Koenig. Their homes remain today in the Washington Park neighborhood (see Interesting Neighborhood Features below).

But it was the development of the park that attracted settlers in larger numbers. In its earliest decades Washington Park offered a horse racing track, carriage rides, band shell, a lovely lagoon, and a zoo. The zoo had modest beginnings. Wealthy patrons began to donate animals beginning with five deer, and shortly after a buck, an eagle, and an elephant named Countess Heine. Within a few years, the park had a Goat Mountain and a Monkey Island. The curiosities and beauty of the park drew in large numbers of mainly German settlers beginning in the last decade of the 19th century.

By 1900, the City of Milwaukee had annexed the region to the far side of the park, and West Park was renamed Washington Park, reflecting the patriotic sentiment of the times. In harmony with its German population, 30 different German-American cultural societies donated the monument of playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and poet Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller to the park in 1908. When World War I generated a backlash against Germans in Milwaukee, the Muehlenberg unit of the Von Steuben Society donated the statue of Frederick Wilhelm von Steuben to the park as a symbol of German loyalty to America. Von Steuben had served as inspector general and major general in the Revolutionary War under

Today's neighborhood-
Washington Park Library



George Washington.

By 1930 the blocks of Washington Park neighborhood were filled to capacity. The area also generated strong business corridors on Vliet Street and Lisbon Avenue.

Vliet Street

Vliet Street quickly became a significant commercial corridor. And the street attracted shopkeepers who were not necessarily German. Included among the proprietors were Germans, Irish, Austrians, Jews, Hungarians, Croatians, Poles, Czechs, Italians, Chinese, Russians, and Scots. The following chart shows the businesses and offices that were on Vliet Street on the border of today's Washington Park and Martin Drive neighborhoods in 1933. See summary and notes below.

<i>Addresses on W. Vliet St. in the Washington Park neighborhood in 1933.</i>	<i>Businesses, offices, apartments, organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
3505	Wadhaus Oil Company Filling Station
3506	Anton Schuller Tavern
3521	H.J. Bauer Plumbing and Heating Company Inc.
3523	Clarence C. Schuld Barber
3525	J. Schumacher and Sons Shoes
3529	Frederick C. Breyer Sporting Goods
3603	Wisconsin Blind Products
3605	Apartments
3607	Iris Beauty Shoppe
3610	Rose Schuenke Dry Goods
3616	Anton A. Peserl Bakery
3700	William J. Stafeil Drugs
3704	Marion Beauty Shop
3705	Frank's Quality Market and Meats (Frank Lakosh)
3706	Frank Friedmann Tailor
3710	John L. Reisner Men's Furnishings
3711	Bernard Mildie Shoes
3714-3716	Edward Tarman Soft Drinks
3715	Robert W. Ash Tavern
3718	Abraham Hanshar Groceries
3719	Vincent Hoffer Tavern
3720	Hoerig & Koller Barbers

<i>Addresses on W. Vliet St. in the Washington Park neighborhood in 1933.</i>	<i>Businesses, offices, apartments, organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
3724	Park Sheet Metal & Furnace Laura S. Gartzka Hem Stitching
3726	Charles J. Paterka Tavern
3737	Lyric Barber Shop
3739	Vincent J. Scagilione Tailor
3743	William Dick Tavern
3801	William Zeidler Groceries Verna Zeidler Music Teacher
3804	Lyric Theatre
3805	William A. Zeidler Confectioners
3807	Sommers Hat Studio
3813	George E. Puehler Shoe Repair
3820	Park Radio and Sport Shop Electric Meter Engineering Company
3822	Apartments
3824	Leonard Drugs
3826	Kohl's Food Market
3832	Purity Market
3900	George H. Linert Tavern
3901	Gustav H. Weichert Baker
3907	Oriental Food Company Restaurant (Joe C. Chong)
3910	Morris A. Boxer Groceries
3913	Fred C. Lipscomb Carpet Contractor
3914-3916	Behm & Thorau Tavern (Edward Behm)
3920	MFD Electric Company
3924	Cecil Bedker Barber
3930	John J. Huele Upholstery
3934	Edward Schalbe Grocery
3942	Peter Lauer and Sons Carpet Contractors

<i>Addresses on W. Vliet St. in the Washington Park neighborhood in 1933.</i>	<i>Businesses, offices, apartments, organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
4211	Ralph N. Brodie Inc. Meters
4307	Leo Bayer Baker
4311	Louis Soffert Meats
4315	Louis H. Krueser Drugs
4600	Washington Park Zoo
4601	Standard Oil Company Filling Station
4615	West Park Cleaners and Dyers
4617	John D. McCusker Tile
4627	Park Service Station

Summary and notes from census and other records:

- Vliet Street certainly had enough resources to meet the needs of residents—even in the throes of the Great Depression. Included in the above are seven grocery stores, three bakeries, two meat shops, four barbers, three filling stations, and three pharmacies.
- Despite being at the height of the Depression, the neighborhood offered numerous leisure time outlets, including seven taverns, one theatre, and a Chinese restaurant.
- Most shopkeepers lived above, behind, or a few doors down from their shops.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had high school educations. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants.
- Anton Schuller, with the tavern, was an Austrian immigrant. He lived just around the corner from his bar on 32nd Street.
- Fred C. Breyer, with the sporting goods shop, was the son of a German immigrant. The store had started out as an auto supply outlet.
- Rose Schuenke, with the dry goods store, was a single woman in business. She was the daughter of German immigrants. She lived at or next door to her shop.
- Anton Peserl, with the bakery, was a Hungarian immigrant from Yugoslavia. He lived at the same address as his store.
- William J. Stafeil, with the pharmacy, was an anomaly because he'd spent a year in college. He was the son of a German immigrant.
- Frank Friedmann, with the tavern, was another Hungarian immigrant from Yugoslavia. The family spoke German and the father had been a brewer.

- John Reisner, with the men's wear store, was one of a handful of merchants on Vliet who was not an immigrant or child of an immigrant. His family was from New Jersey.
- Robert Ash, with the tavern, was the son of a German immigrant. He lived at the same address as his tavern. He'd been a chauffeur before opening his bar.
- Abraham Hanshar/Hansher, with the grocery store, was an immigrant from Poland. He was probably Jewish.
- Vincent Hoffer, with the tavern, was another Hungarian immigrant. Unlike most of the Vliet Street shopkeepers, he lived in the downtown area.
- Laura Gartzka/Gartzke, the hem stitcher, was a single woman in business. The daughter of a German immigrant, her father had operated a hardware store on Vliet but died relatively young.
- Charles Paterka, with the tavern, did not stay in business long. The son of a German and a Czech immigrant, Paterka was doing government work by 1940 (possibly for the Works Progress Administration).
- Vincent J. Scagilioni, the tailor, was an Italian immigrant. He lived two addresses down from his shop.
- William Dick, with the tavern, was a Croatian immigrant from Yugoslavia.
- William Zeidler, with the grocery and sweet shop, had been a saloon keeper before opening his confectionary. Verna/Veronica was his daughter and she taught piano. The family is probably German, but it is not known if they are related to Mayor Frank Zeidler. They lived at the same address as the grocery store.
- George Puehler with the shoe repair place, had been apparently raised in Menomonee Falls. His father was the son of German immigrants and was a butter maker.
- The Kohl's Food Market was apparently one of the early stores opened by Maxwell Kohl.
- Gustav Weichert, the baker, was a German immigrant. He'd had that shop on Vliet since the late 1800s.
- Joe C. Chong, with the Chinese restaurant, was born in California. See his profile below.
- Morris Boxer, with the grocery store, was a Yiddish-speaking immigrant from Russia.
- Fred Lipscomb, the carpet contractor, was the son of a Canadian immigrant. He'd lived his entire life around the corner on 36th St.
- Cecil Bedker, the barber, was the son of German immigrant farmers from Dodge County, WI.
- Edward Scholbe, the grocer, was born in Germany. He lived around the corner on 34th St.
- Peter Lauer, the carpet contractor, was the son of German immigrants. At the time of this listing, he was retired and living with his daughters. His sons were running the business.

- Leo Bayer, the baker, was the son of an immigrant from Hungary.
- Ralph N. Brodie, with the meter company, was an immigrant from Scotland. He'd lived in Marinette, WI before opening his business in Milwaukee.
- John D. McCusker, with the tile store, was the son of an Irish immigrant. He lived next door to his shop.

Washington Park merchant profile (1930s) *(Information from census and other public records)*

Joe C. Chong

In 1933, Joe C. Chong operated the Oriental Food Restaurant at 3907 W. Vliet. Records suggest that he originally lived in California and migrated to Chicago where he and a younger brother operated a "Chop Suey"¹ business.

Chinese immigration to the U.S. began in the 1850s. The Chinese were searching for ways to escape problems associated with the Opium Wars that left China under European domination. Many Chinese were initially drawn to California because of the discovery of gold in 1848. Like the European-Americans, they were very interested in wealth. But by the time they arrived, there were slim pickings. As a result, most of the Chinese looked for other ways to earn money. Some returned home and others ended up as permanent residents on the West Coast.

Chinese men tended to come alone to the United States for several reasons. First, it was cheaper. Second, some immigrated to America with the idea that they could "strike it rich" and then return home. Third, China had cultural norms against women traveling abroad. Because so few "struck it rich," many men ended up becoming permanent settlers, but laws and economic circumstances would restrict them from sending home for their wives. In addition to the problems the Chinese faced in sending for their wives, local laws prohibited intermarriage between Chinese and European Americans. The absence of women among the Chinese Americans resulted in a bachelor society where the ratio of males to females was approximately 17 to 1.

The Chinese were the first ethnic group singled out for immigration exclusion. On the year that Joe Chong was born, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was passed, barring further immigration of Chinese laborers and excluded wives of Chinese who were United States citizens.

Joe Chong remained in Milwaukee until at least the late 1950s when he likely died. It is not clear how long he ran the restaurant.



Below is a resident profile of an acclaimed artist who began his life in the neighborhood.

Washington Park resident profile (early 20th century) (Information from census and other public records)

Karl Priebe

Karl J. Priebe (b. 1914) was an internationally recognized painter known for his depictions of birds, exotic animals, and African American culture.

As a young child, Priebe lived in the Washington Park neighborhood on Lisbon Avenue. His father, Emil Priebe was the son of German immigrants and operated a meat market. His mother, Catherine, was a homemaker. In 1920, Karl had one brother and three sisters.

Sometime in the late 1930s, the upwardly mobile Priebe family moved a few blocks away to the Washington Heights neighborhood, which was becoming an upscale appendage to Washington Park. The family lived at 1812 North 49th Street. Young Karl, who'd taken up an interest in art and animals, quickly became close friends with another artist in Washington Heights—John Wilde ([see his profile in the Washington Heights neighborhood](#)).

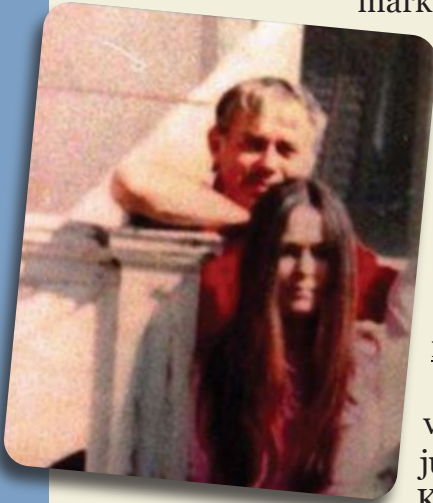
The Priebe family prospered. In 1930, their home was valued at \$15,000. The average new home cost for that year was just over \$7,000. By 1940—even in the throes of the Great Depression, Karl's father Emil reported an annual income of \$3,960, which was approximately triple the median income for that year.

Regardless of the family finances in 1940, son Karl had a full-time job. He worked as an ethologist, studying animal behavior, for a public institution—likely the zoo at Washington Park. The income was probably to help him pay for college, as he was in his last year of high school at the time.

Karl studied and graduated from the Layton School of Art, and later the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he graduated in 1938. While studying in Chicago, he taught a class in a settlement house that served mainly African Americans. He went on to work for the Milwaukee Public Museum (anthropology staff) until 1942 and then directed the Kalamazoo Institute of the Arts until 1944. Ultimately Priebe returned to Layton and served as an art instructor in 1947.

His work began to achieve international recognition and he merited showings in some of the most prestigious galleries, including those in New York City. His paintings of exotic animals were probably influenced by his teenage work as an ethologist, and likely his paintings of African American culture were influenced by his work in the Chicago settlement house. Throughout his life, Priebe expressed love for black culture. He had cultivated friendships with people such as Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, and Pearl Bailey.

Priebe's health failed in his late 50s. In 1975 he had one of his eyes surgically removed. He later struggled with cancer and died when he was only 62. See his photoⁱⁱ to the left with another artist, Nancy Berghaus, in 1975.



Post World War II

In the late 1940s through the mid-1960s, most Milwaukee neighborhoods were rapidly gaining acreage and population as the result of annexations and the postwar housing boom. Washington Park, which had been filled since the early years of the Great Depression, actually took a loss. Clearance for the Stadium Freeway cost the neighborhood its western section and that slice of the park that housed the zoo. The zoo moved to its current location on West Bluemound Road.

Current populations (as of 2021)

The neighborhood of Washington Park, with just under 5,000 residents, remains culturally eclectic, but little of the diversity today is European. Just over 8 in 10 residents are African Americans. Approximately 1 in 14 are European Americans (mostly of German, German Russian, Irish, and Polish ancestry), and just under 1 in 25 each are Asian (mostly Hmong/Lao) and Latino (fairly evenly divided between those of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent). The rest are indigenous Africans, and people of multiple backgrounds. The greatest population density in Washington Park is in the northeastern section of the neighborhood.

The median household income for neighborhood residents is approximately \$25,000, placing them on the cusp between low and lower middle-income strata. The leading jobs listed by residents are in the fields of education, personal care, sales, and administration.

INTERESTING NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

- **Hmong American Friendship Association**, at 3824 W. Vliet, a non-profit organization and small museum that celebrates Hmong heritage.
- **The Franz Joseph Uhric mansion**, at the edge of the Washington Park neighborhood at 1727 N. 34th St., built in 1951 as a summer home for a St. Louis brewer.
- **The Ludwig von Baumbach home**, at 1440 North 40th St., built in 1854 as a summer farm home for a wealthy German immigrant.
- **Urban Ecology Center**, at 1859 N. 40th Street, offering a myriad of family programs on the environment (see some below).
- **The Frederick Koenig home**, at 1731 N. 32nd Street, built in the late 1800s as a summer farm home for the president of the Milwaukee and Brookfield Macadamized Turnpike Company.

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.

EARLY MORNING BIRDWALK--WASHINGTON			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Most Wed.'s 8-10am	Washington Park, 1859 N. 40th St.	A walk for bird watchers of all ability levels to explore Washington Park for birds.	Free, but might need to register

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS EASTER EGG HUNT			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Mar., Sat. 11:45am-1pm	Washington Park, 1859 N. 40th St.	Fun event for children and adults with Easter egg hunt.	Free

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--WASHINGTON

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4th, 11am-10pm	Washington Park, 1859 N. 40th St.	Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, games, fireworks.	Free

WEDNESDAYS AT THE SHELL IN WASHINGTON PARK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Summer months, Wed.'s, 6-8:30pm	Washington Park, 1859 N. 40th St.	A variety of difference musical genres and bands.	Free

MILWAUKEE BREWERS GAMES

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Apr. to late Sep., see website for times	Miller Park. 1 Brewers Way	Major league baseball games.	Prices vary

EARLY MORNING BIRDWALK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Most Tue.'s, 8-10am	Menomonee Valley, 3700 W. Pierce St.	A walk for bird watchers of all ability levels to explore Three Bridges Park for birds. Register at Urban Ecology website.	Free, need to register

SLEDDING THE SLOPES OF MENOMONEE VALLEY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jan. Tue. 4-6pm	Menomonee Valley, 3700 W. Pierce St.	An evening of snow and sledding in Three Bridges Park with hot chocolate (if there is no snow, will hike Three Bridges Park). Register at Urban Ecology website.	Free

SHAKESPEARE IN THREE BRIDGES PARK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul., Fri. 7pm	Menomonee Valley behind Palermo Villa next to 33rd Ct.	Play performed by Summit Players along river in the park.	Free, but donations welcome

FRIENDS OF HANK AARON STATE TRAIL 5K RUN/WALK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Aug., Sat. 7- 8:15am	Start and finish near Klement's Sausage Haus (on the east end of Miller Park Stadium)	Opportunity to walk or run in race on Hank Aaron trail, or be a spectator—entertainment and food available. (Requires registration to participate)	Free (to watch)

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

Quotes from 2019 oral history of Washington Park conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.ⁱⁱⁱ—Then

“At Washington Park you went to the zoo. You could safely walk to the zoo at Washington Park and the big deal was to get an ice cream sandwich and watch the monkeys on monkey island. There was a playground there to play. You could rent a boat on the lagoon, go rowing.”

“In my earliest memories it was a white neighborhood. A lot of German speakers and backgrounds. A lot of families that belonged to the same church as I did. A lot of stores on North Avenue from 35th and North to Sherman boulevard. A bank. A grocery store, butcher shop, card store, five and dimes. Everything was on 35th. There was a JC Penny on 35th and North avenue. It was a two-story building. There was a bar next door on the corner.”

“[Back in the 1990s] The neighborhood looked much like it does today. This business [Amaranth] wasn’t here until 2006 and the building across the street was a flop-house. Investor-owned and largely neglected. There was an aging-out gang scene. At that point they were mostly just amused by the street and not engaged in shenanigans on the street.”

“Within five or six blocks you had two pharmacies, a grocery store, a bank, two five-and-ten cent stores, two shoe stores, an ice cream parlor, two bakeries, a meat market, a very nice card and gift shop, a piano store, a hat store, Northwestern Publishing House that was part of the Lutheran Synod. You could buy bibles. [There were] churches, a couple bars, a bowling alley. Finney Library was on Sherman and North. There were several doctors’ offices on North Avenue. There was JC Penny. There was a dairy on North Avenue. The only thing that was a national chain was the A&P grocery store and the Kohls grocery store. Everything was local, private business. Maybe the dime stores were national. None of it is there today. There is a Pick ‘n Save there now a little north of North Ave. Some of the buildings have been torn down. Some have been changed or boarded up but there mostly gone. All those wonderful owner-occupied stores are long gone.”

the person who went to work. There was no fear of walking to Washington Park or anyplace. That is history. When you’re down there now safety is a concern.”

“From time to time there have been elders in the African-American community that would act as a bridge between youngsters of different groups.”

“During the recession a lot of the policy folk got this notion that they shouldn’t sell to poor folk and that people here could not afford a home. But to buy a home here is a very calculated decision and you have people who are managing to budget accordingly and take care of their homes.”

“The Parkway Theatre had been knocked down which was an X-rated theatre and tended to draw unsavory characters.”

“You played outside with the kids in your neighborhood--on the sidewalk, in the alleys. You played baseball, you rode your bikes, or go roller skating. In the winter you would go skating on the lagoon at Washington Park or go sledding.”

“You knew all of your neighbors and walked everywhere. Most families had one car used by

“When I was a child most of the people that lived in the neighborhood would be considered blue-collar workers. Not a whole lot of professional doctors or lawyers. They went to a factory or drove a truck. They worked outside the neighborhood; there was not a whole lot of industry in the area.”

“Prior to 1980 this corner had been a pre-war suburb style, second-tier retail. Five-and-dimes and things like that. George Webb and the post office had been here as well as the non-X-rated theatre. Then there was a forty-year slip to the present. Lisbon had been slated to be boulevarded but they ran out of money before reaching this point, and therefore you have these buildings that could not be altered due to the anticipation that they would be acquired through eminent domain to build the boulevard. After that you had disinvestment which led to loss of stores, and eventually you had gangs and bars. You used to have many bars throughout here. There is Cares Candies which used to have a storefront here, but they now sell at the Milwaukee Public Market. Now they just manufacture around here. They didn’t move due to the rise of gangs but because their customer base as well as employees had aged out. Our business here was based on a parallel thrust by the father of a family that owned a party store down the street. They were very committed to the neighborhood, which was infectious. About a dozen of us bought into these buildings at a time when you would get no financing for them. Thankfully they are structurally sound and could be rehabbed on a five-year plan and operate out of pocket. They moved out of the neighborhood after the wife had a brain aneurysm and have moved on and done well.”

“There were four Lutheran churches that were quite strong, two of which continue. Reformation Lutheran was still strong, Hope Lutheran was still going. It is more of an immediate area. There are many more churches with larger impact connected to a larger community. I worked closely with St. Michaels that was a tri-parish initiative around immigration, education, and housing advocacy that I was very involved with. So, St. Francis, St. Rose, and St. Michaels originally. St. Andrews. Of course, their effort to build a church, to build a congregation didn’t work. They had more money but different priorities, so by 2005 they had pretty much shut down. A number of local churches. The building next door had a storefront church. The Methodist church had closed and become an affiliate of other churches in the central city. When I moved here, St. Thomas Aquinas had closed, and the school had closed. However, MPS had started a charter school that ran the Catholic school. It was split into a two-campus school. I think in its heyday it had somewhere upward of 900 students.”

“People just did things as families. When you only have one car and not a lot of resources you just do things as a family. As a kid you went to school and you went home. You didn’t have another activity. Now a days it is very, very different.”

“Growing up there was St. Thomas on 35th and Brown. There was a church on 38th and North Ave that is a Baptist church now--I couldn’t tell you what it was growing up. Those were just from 35th and Brown. There were many more surrounding that. Bethany was organized on October 4th of 1893. The church started on 33rd and Brown which ultimately was turned into a school and the building where we are now was dedicated in February 1922 on 38th and Lloyd. The church and school were initially all in German because the neighborhood was German. It was later changed to English. We had a German service up until one of the pastors retired in 2003, but he kept on as an interim pastor and he preached in German until that time in 2005. So, we had a strong German showing despite the change in the neighborhood.”

Quotes from 2019 oral history of Washington Park conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.—Now

“By 1996/97 the street we live on, 34th Street, was primarily Southeast Asian. East of 27th street, the earlier immigrant communities were Lao. Hmong came slightly later and settled west of 27th. That primarily had to do with insurance rates for automobiles. It was considerably cheaper in 53203 than 53233. So, when they were buying new vehicles, they could have a much more affordable insurance package as well as affordable house. We still have the greatest concentration of Southeast Asians in the city. There are Burmese refugees as well as Somali and Kenyan refugees. The majority of the neighborhood is still African-American.”

“It is amazing how empty lots have been utilized. Whether it be soccer, football, or kickball. A cool thing the Burmese refugees have brought has been the hands-free volleyball sport with a smaller ball and lower net. In larger spots where there are five lots or more you might see three nets setup and a tournament going. That is kind of a Burmese and Hmong collaboration at times.”

“It is tough not to say there is concentrated poverty, but that is from the outside looking in. From the inside it does not look that way. It looks like people have figured out a way to get by and improve.”

“We [business] work with Arts-at-Large and Artists Working in Education. We have two or three different projects east of us at the garden which have been completed over various summers. We have a community garden that we started in ‘98. We formed an organization of local growers, mostly elders in Hmong families, and some elders in African-American families. They would rent plots from 0 to 20 dollars per plot per season.”

“It got to the point where some churches were doing services in three languages: Hmong, Spanish, and English, and maybe some Lao.”

“Riding bikes is a great past time for the kids. Whether it is through the Boys and Girls Club or just independently. Basketball, there are just as many hoops in an alley whether it is Hmong or African-American families using it.”

“Many people here work in elder care regardless of ethnic group. Caretaking runs deep here and I would say St. John’s on the Lake is the primary employer of people in the neighborhood. In the Hmong community it is automotive [industry] whether it be retail or manufacturing. There is also self-employment. The informal economy is also very prevalent. People do automotive service in the alley; hairstyling is done in people’s houses.”

“The white Germans are gone. It is a very transient neighborhood. A lot of black Americans and African immigrants. There are also Burmese and Hmong immigrants.”

“The younger immigrants speak English; the older generations speak Karen and don’t interact with the people at the main service.”

“Over the years we have seen the best and the worst of potential problems and tensions. Some police presence has been required which has at times exacerbated problems and in others diffuse the situation.”

“Sometimes the African immigrants and the black Americans do not get along. Sometimes there is that friction between them. I do not know that either one of those two mix with the Burmese or the Hmong. They tend to stay in their pockets.”

“[They work together in] one case, [where] there were some young kids who challenged the littlest to jump a fence and steal something from the yard of a Hmong family. By the time he had jumped the fence the Hmong family had surrounded him. Fortunately, the family called the police and a talk between a young African-American officer and the kid took place and instead of a write-up they went over to the Episcopal church. Our Next Generation diffused the situation and set up a program to help with these situations. Kids have been great to bring people together as they don’t have the same biases that we do.”

“The aspirations of the immigrant populations are very similar to that of whites within the neighborhood.”

“There have been city sponsored and/or redevelopment/community building efforts that I have been involved in over the years. I help support a number of artists and organizations. I work in the area and own this business. ONG [Our Next Generation], that is based out of St. Andrews church, that would collaborate with youth arts organization which we have provided public spaces for. Either on our properties and lots or worked with the city to have it on theirs. The pop-up gallery across the street was first sponsored by Express Yourself Milwaukee and was redone by ONG.”

“Ramadan is an incredible moment [in the neighborhood] because during the fast it is very, very quiet during the day. Then the celebration goes on at night.”

PHOTOS

Today's neighborhood-
Reformation Lutheran Church 35th & Garfield



Today's neighborhood-
Community Garden at 35th St.

Today's neighborhood-Washington Park Library



Today's neighborhood-
Public art at 39th & Lisbon

Today's neighborhood-
Lloyd St. & W. Lisbon Ave.





Today's neighborhood-
House at 39th & Roberts



Today's neighborhood-
Washington Park band shell (detail)

Today's neighborhood-Washington Park band shell



ⁱ Photo attribution: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/4d/Chopsueywithrice.jpg/640px-Chopsueywithrice.jpg>

ⁱⁱ Photo attribution: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/o/oa/Karlpriebebenancyberghaus.jpg>

ⁱⁱⁱ 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.

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:

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OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS

Local community gardening. (Photos courtesy of Dennis Lukeszewski of the University Extension)

