

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Oklahoma Ave; **S**-W. Howard Ave; **E**-S. 39th St
(partial) S. 40th St, **W**-S. 43rd St

SOUTHWEST SIDE *Alverno*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

The neighborhood of Alverno is a moderate to low density area. A large section is occupied by the Alverno College campus. The blocks north of the campus have tightly spaced homes that are mostly small, simple Tudor and Cape Cod style houses. The area south of the campus from West Morgan Avenue to West Howard Avenue is the Cherokee Way subdivision. Most of the homes and condominiums in this area appear to have been built within the last ten years. The houses tend to be large, two-story structures done in the Craftsmen Bungalow or Colonial styles.

The Alverno neighborhood is mainly flat with gently rolling hills throughout. The streets north of the Alverno College campus are on a rectangular grid pattern, whereas those south of the campus in the Cherokee Point subdivision are all newly built, winding roads. The main green space in the neighborhood is part of the Alverno College campus. In addition, there is a small private park for residents of the Cherokee Point subdivision with playground equipment. See neighborhood photos below.

Today's neighborhood-Alverno College



HISTORY

The Alverno neighborhood is named after its college.

Early populations

In the 1920s second- and third-generation residents with substantial incomes on the South Side were settling at Milwaukee's edge, in the Jackson Park, Southgate, and Southpoint neighborhoods. Most of these migrants were German or Polish—often Catholics. Many built upscale homes along South Forest Home Avenue.

This was not true of the Alverno neighborhood, which developed later. By 1932, the area within the current neighborhood boundaries had fewer than 10 residences and 2 businesses (both on Oklahoma).

A major change occurred in 1946. The School Sisters of St. Francis purchased 50 acres of the Fischer Farm on 39th and Morgan as a place to expand earlier operations. The work of the School Sisters had begun in Milwaukee in 1887 when they established St. Joseph Convent on 27th and Greenfield—which at the time was at the edge of Milwaukee. The Convent spawned a school that was known as the St. Joseph's Academy and High School for Girls and Young Ladies (as John Gurda once said, "Try spelling that out on a sweatshirt"). In 1920 the Academy added a two-year post-secondary program and renamed itself St. Joseph Normal School. By the 1930s the Normal School morphed into a four-year institution under the title of Alverno Teachers College. It was this institution that the School Sisters hoped to further expand at the 50-acre site in today's Alverno neighborhood—an area that was once again at Milwaukee's edge.

By 1947, following groundbreaking for the college, the Great Depression, and World War II, there were still fewer than 10 residences, 1 church, and 2 businesses in the Alverno neighborhood. None of the streets or homes that are today in the southern half of the neighborhood had been constructed.

The resident being profiled below is a most typical early settler in Alverno.

Alverno resident profile (late 20th century)

(information from *Milwaukee City Directory* and other public records)

Joseph B. Parchen

Joe Parchen was born on Milwaukee's South Side in 1898, to parents Felix and Anna (nee Menga) Parchen, Polish immigrants. Growing up in a large household, he'd lived on Garden Street (today's South 5th Place) and 3rd Avenue (today's South 8th Street). He completed the 6th grade in school. By age 18 he had joined the Army and served during World War I between 1917 and 1919.

After returning from service, Joseph got a job in a tailor shop as a cutter (see example photoⁱ of a tailor shop in the 1940s). He married Evelyn (maiden name unknown) sometime between 1930 and 1932. By 1940 the couple did not have any children. Despite Great Depression times, Joseph earned a good income--\$1,550, considerably above the annual median for the times. Joe and Evelyn initially lived on North 70th Street in Wauwatosa and later moved to the edge of the Alverno neighborhood, where they either rented or purchased a home at 40th and West Howard Avenue.

It is not known how long Joe and Evelyn lived in the Alverno neighborhood. They both died in Milwaukee—Joseph in 1973 and Evelyn in 1984.



By the 1950s more residents had moved to the area. The name of Alverno Teachers College was changed to Alverno College, and the campus was again expanding. Original buildings included the main administration structure (now Founders Hall) and its classrooms, chapel, cafeteria and kitchen; the auditorium and gym on the south; and Corona Hall (dormitory) on the north. By 1956 the resident population outgrew Corona Hall, and the construction of Clare Hall was begun. In the 1960s Loretta Hall (now Austin) and the Nursing Education Building were added. In the 1970s, Weekend College (now known as Alverno on the Weekend) was launched to reach out to working women who lacked the time to earn their degrees. Over 1,000 students commuted daily to the campus.

Beginning at the turn of the 21st century, new roads were added to the southern half of the Alverno neighborhood, including Cherokee Way, Stonebridge Court, Centennial Circle, Willow Way, and Toldt Circle. Housing soon followed, including the Cherokee Point Subdivision. Both families and students were moving into the Alverno neighborhood.

Current populations (as of 2021)

The Alverno neighborhood today has approximately 1,200 residents. Over 4 in 10 are between the ages of 18 and 29, reflecting the student population living in the area. The overwhelming majority of the residents are European Americans (nearly 7 in 10), with the highest number claiming German, Polish, and "other" ancestry. Over 2 in 10 are Latinos (mostly of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Central American descent). The neighborhood also has a scattering of African Americans, Asians (of Lao, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese descent), and people of mixed racial backgrounds.

The median household income for Alverno residents is just over \$14,000 annually, placing the neighborhood in the low income stratum—no doubt again reflecting a strong student population. The largest number of occupations claimed by adult residents are in the fields of administration, food service, and education. The neighborhood has nearly three times the number of health technicians than the proportion in other Milwaukee neighborhoods.

Residents are also highly educated compared to Milwaukeeans overall. Just under 40 percent have degrees beyond high school. This is typical of a college neighborhood.

RECURRING NEARBY OUTINGS (Public 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.

MOVIES AT SOUTHGATE CINEMA			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily	3320 S. 30th St.	Popular movies at a Marcus Theater.	\$10, \$7.50 kids, military (with ID), seniors; less for Matinees (subject to change)

MILWAUKEE FIRE MUSEUM			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
1st Sun. of each month, 1-4pm, (except holidays)	1516 W. Oklahoma Ave.	Opportunity to see exhibits and artifacts of the Milwaukee Fire Department back to the 1800s; stories of history of Department and fires.	Free

UMOS MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Sep., Sun. 10am-12pm	Starts at 20th & Oklahoma Ave. (see route on website)	Southside parade of arts, floats, local organizations honoring Mexican Independence Day.	Free

WINTER FEST AT JACKSON PARK			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Dec., Sat. 11am-3 pm	Jackson Park, 3500 W. Forest Home Ave.	Face-painting, cocoa, crafts for kids, music, and more.	Free

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--JACKSON			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4, 8am-10pm	Jackson Park, 3500 W. Forest Home Ave.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, free ice cream, fireworks.	Free

JACKSON PARK FARMERS MARKET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun. thru early Sep., Thu. 3:30-7pm	3300 W. Forest Home Ave.	Fresh food from Wisconsin farms, baked goods, crafts, art.	Free

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 Alverno and wish to make an interesting comment about this neighborhood, please send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 43rd & Euclid



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 42nd & Euclid

Today's neighborhood-Houses on Willow Way (Cherokee Point subdivision)



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 43rd St.



Today's neighborhood-Houses on S. Cherokee Way



Today's neighborhood-Private Park on S. Cherokee Way

¹ Photo attribution: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1d/Making_Uniforms_Tip_Top_Tailors.jpg

For more information on Milwaukee neighborhoods, refer to John Gurda's *Milwaukee, City of Neighborhoods*.

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 Dr. Jill Florence Lackey at: jflanthropologist@currently.com