

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Keefe Ave; S-W. Burleigh;

E-Hwy 43, W-N.20th St

NORTH SIDE *Borchert Field*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

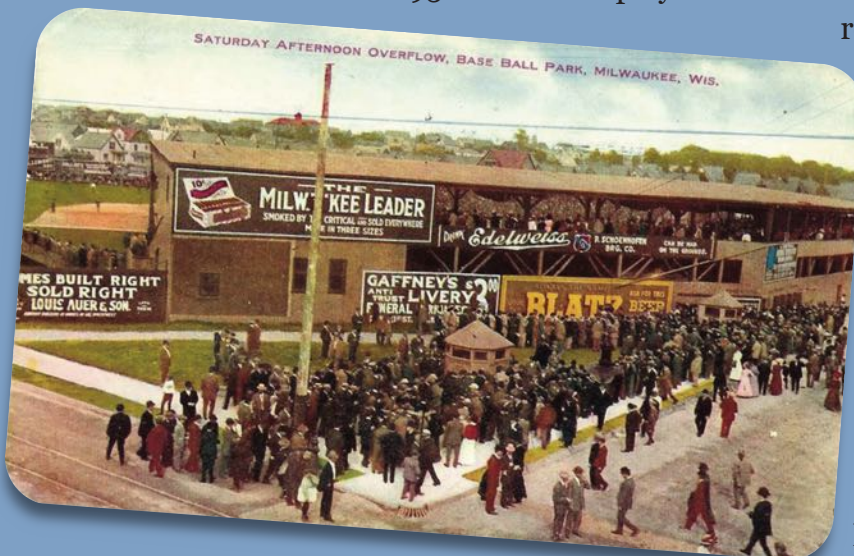
Borchert Field is a mostly residential neighborhood with a modest business corridor on Burleigh Street. The neighborhood has gently rolling mounds and a relatively steep hill that slopes from the north side of Borchert Field at Keefe Avenue down to Ring Street. Streets follow a grid pattern with the exception of North Teutonia Avenue that runs at a diagonal from Keefe to Burleigh. The main neighborhood housing types are bungalows and two-story duplexes built in the early 20th century.

Union Cemetery occupies the rest of the neighborhood west of Teutonia, taking up approximately one-third of Borchert Field. See neighborhood photos below.

HISTORY

The neighborhood of Borchert Field owes its name to Otto Borchert, a one-time owner of the minor league Milwaukee Brewers, a member team of the American Association between 1902 and 1952. The team played at Athletic Field, built in 1888, which was later

renamed Brewers Field, and eventually called Borchert Field after the team's owner. Ironically, Borchert Field (see below¹) is not even within the boundaries of the current neighborhood by that name. The stadium, that was razed in 1952, was bounded by North 7th, 8th, Chambers, and Burleigh Streets, off the southeastern border of today's Borchert Field neighborhood, covered in part now by Interstate-43, but clearly located in the North Division area. The following photo provides a glimpse of rooftops surrounding the stadium—some in today's Borchert Field neighborhood and some in North Division.



Postcard of Athletic Field exterior, 1911

Early populations

The earliest known and long-tenured population in the Borchert Field area was German. Germans had been settling in large numbers in Milwaukee since the early 1800s. As Milwaukee grew, the boundaries moved north, reaching Center Street in 1865 and Burleigh Street in 1866. Residents were migrating into the Borchert Field area from the center of the city and Town of Wauwatosa neighborhoods.

Many of the newly settled Germans were Lutherans who needed a place to bury their dead. An association to open a cemetery was organized in January of 1865 and for two years was managed by a board of trustees chosen by the congregations of Grace and St. John's Churches. Later that year, the first person was interred in the cemetery. Her name was Maria Heitz. By 1880 the total number of interments at Union Cemetery had reached nearly 10,000.

More space was needed. By 1894 the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that members of Lutheran churches on the north and west sides met to explore purchasing a nearby farm owned by the Lindwurm family. Seventy-three acres were immediately available for cemetery purposes. A month later the *Sentinel* reported that 13 other properties were offered as land for the cemetery. A farm owned by the Krause family was available for \$21,000 and the local churches worked with Lutheran congregations in Tess Corners, North Greenfield, and Wauwatosa to join them in purchasing the farm. Soon Union Cemetery occupied approximately one-third of the Borchert Field area.

Germans (including some German Russians and German Jews who had migrated to Russia and then the U.S.) remained the dominant population well into the 20th century when the neighborhood was completely filled. *Milwaukee City Directory* records show literally a handful of residents with names other than German during these decades. Local residents enjoyed the beer gardens in nearby neighborhoods, ballgames at Borchert Field, and access to jobs in local shops. The major shopping area for Borchert Field residents was North 3rd Street, just walking distance from their homes, in today's Harambee neighborhood. (To read a sample of the business owners in the major commercial corridors in Harambee, click on the [Harambee neighborhood link](#)

The major business corridor in Borchert Field was on Burleigh, between North 8th and 16th Streets. See a list of businesses below on this stretch in 1933. A summary and notes follow.

<i>Addresses on W. Burleigh in 1933</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, organizations, factories from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
802	Louis M. Faber Filling Station
809-11	Frasch & Zinke
833	Lippold's Pharmacy
901-07	Herman Ruwitch Dry Cleaners
905	Alfred W. Walton Dentist
909	Hugo F. Wolfgram Shoes
915	Oscar S. Teuteberg Grocery
916	Albert E. Gasch Jeweler
918	Elmer H. Kaufmann Hardware
919	Fred Mey Meats
920	Joseph Schmidt Jr. Malt
925	Burleigh Theater
928	Peter P. Miller Linoleum
932	Arthur Kroening Used Cars
934	Joseph Klostermann Coal
935	William Werner Shoe Repair

<i>Addresses on W. Burleigh in 1933</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, organizations, factories from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
937	Judson W. Parker Confectioner
939	National Tea Company
1000	General Cleaners & Furriers (Julius Ugent Furrier)
1002	Robert H. Coulson Barber
1004	Edward M. Horswill Photographer
1025	Louis Berlowitz Grocery
1027	Harry W. Boldt Barber
1029	John Rohdik Lunch
1031	Victor Dall Radio Shop
1032	Standard Oil Filling Station
1033	Carl L. Toepfer Dentist Ann Lang Beauty Shop
1035	Daniel Gean Cleaners
1037	Rav J. Beier Drugs
1200-04	Fred E. Lins Inc. Sausage Manufacturers
1211	Marie Karls Dresses
1212	Mrs. Dorothy Pfeiffer Furniture Rooms
1213	Emil D. Dallesasse Barber
1215	Edward Schelble Physician Arthur F. Leischow Dentist
1226	Grover C. Gould Meats
1230	Fred Buerger Bakery
1234	Great A & P Tea Company
1301	Bungalow Service Station
1304	William F. Bries Meats
1311	Richard Schulze Shoe Repair
1317	Otto H. Schmidt Barber
1322	John Schlanberger Exporter
1329	Live Wire Cleaners

<i>Addresses on W. Burleigh in 1933</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, organizations, factories from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
1333	Fred Loch Meats
1345	Emil A. Klemens Contractor
1510	Albert Huck Patternmaker
1533 n.s.	Union Cemetery

Summary and notes from census and other records:

- Resident needs were well met by the shops on Burleigh, even in the years of the Great Depression. Merchants on this stretch included 10 grocers (supermarkets, bakeries, confectioners, small grocers, and butcher shops), 2 pharmacies, a cemetery, 3 gas stations, a hardware store, a restaurant, 4 barbers, 2 cleaners, and a theater—to name just a few.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants.
- Louis Faber, with the filling station, was one of the few merchants who had graduated from high school. By 1940 he had left his gas station business and was working as a secretary. He was the grandson of German immigrants.
- Herman Ruwitch, with the dry-cleaning store, was a Jewish immigrant from Russia. He had apparently never gone to school although he could read and write. He spoke Yiddish.
- Hugo F. Wolfgram, with the shoe store, was the son of German immigrants. He had worked as a machinist before opening his own shop.
- Oscar S. Teuteberg, the grocer, was the son of German immigrants. He had completed the 8th grade.
- The Burleigh Theater had opened in 1915 and remained in operation until 1957. A church now occupies that site.
- Albert E. Gasch, the jeweler, had opened his store on Burleigh prior to the 1920s. He was the son of German immigrants from the Eastern Prussian Provinces.
- Elmer Kaufmann, with the hardware store, was the son of German immigrants from Pomerania. He had been a foreman in a machine shop before opening his own hardware store.
- Fred Mey, with the butcher shop, was a German immigrant. While operating his store, he was living in a boarding house in Granville, northwest of Borchert Field.
- Arthur Kroening, with the used car dealership, had completed the 7th grade. He apparently had more than one dealership in Milwaukee.
- Joseph Klostermann, the coal dealer, was the son of German immigrants. He had completed the 6th grade.
- Although Edward M. Horswill, the photographer, was one of the rare shopkeepers who had completed high school, he remained a boarder with various nearby German families throughout a great part of his career.
- Victor Dall, with the radio shop, had completed the 8th grade. He had left his shop behind by 1940 and was working as a “helper” for the railroad.
- Fred E. Lins, with the sausage factory, began his business right out of college. The son of a German immigrant, he was raised in the Sherman Park neighborhood.
- Dorothy Pfeiffer, with the furniture rooms, also ran a boarding house on Burleigh. She was a German immigrant.

- Emil Dallesasse, the barber, was an anomaly on the street. He was the son of Italian immigrants. Emil did not live in Borchert Field, however, as many of the shopkeepers did. He lived on Bartlett on the East Side. He had completed the 8th grade.
- Grover Gould, the butcher, rented a unit on Chambers St. He did not keep the butcher shop long. By 1940 he owned a farm in Birchwood, WI. He had completed the 8th grade.
- William Bries, another butcher, was from IA and probably not German. He had completed two years of high school. He was working as a salesman for another company by 1940.
- John Schlanberger, the exporter, was a German Austrian immigrant who had completed the 7th grade. By 1940 he was working for a WPA project.
- Emil Klemens, the contractor, was a bricklayer who had been born in Germany.

The following randomly selected household in Borchert Field in 1933 is probably a very typical household for the neighborhood and for the times.

Borchert Field random residents (1930s)

Names selected randomly from the 1933 City Directory in the Borchert Field area (photo and other information found in public records on Ancestry.com)

The Guskes

The Guske extended family lived at 1020 W. Burleigh in 1933. Carl Guske, the patriarch, was 66 at the time and an immigrant from Germany. The family had originally lived in Hartford, Wisconsin and moved to the Borchert Field neighborhood sometime in the 1920s.

The Guskes spoke German at home. Carl worked as a painter for an automobile manufacturer. His wife, Johanna (nee Kadoff) was born in Pankium, Germany.

Like many households during the Great Depression, the Guskes had a number of family members contributing to make ends meet economically. Son Walter, age 20, worked as an upholsterer; daughter Anita, age 18, worked in a knitting factory; daughter Katherine, age 17, was a clerk in a grocery store; son-in-law Edward Ogrosky, married to Guske's daughter Edna, was a bus driver. A young daughter, Geraldine Guske, age 4, also lived in the household.

Carl died just two years after this profile—in 1935. He was buried at his former home in Hartford, probably where his parents had been buried, as there was a Guske family plot nearby. Johanna remained in the family home in Borchert Field with her children. She lived to be 97-years-old and was buried in Wauwatosa.



Other populations arrive

Gradually populations other than German were pushing into the Harambee and Borchert Field areas, mainly from the Lower East Side and Riverwest neighborhoods, which included Poles, Italians, and Puerto Ricans, particularly after World War II. Eastern European Jews continued to open shops along the business corridors in and near Borchert Field. Another population was about to arrive.

African American era

It was the African American population that would dominate Borchert Field in the latter half of the 20th century. Free blacks had lived in Milwaukee since the turn of the 19th century. Milwaukee's first mayor, Solomon Juneau, had an African American cook named Joe Oliver. Most of the earliest arriving blacks who settled in Milwaukee were self-employed or semi-skilled workers, and lived in every area of the city. Many owned property.

Much would change during the period called the Great Migration, which began in 1910. Many push-pull factors would contribute to urban migration of blacks all over the United States—factors including worsening racism in the South, higher wages in the North, and the wartime decline in European immigration—which reduced the number of available workers in industrial cities. Milwaukee actually played a central role in this migration. A city industry, Allis Chalmers, produced the cotton-picking machine, which put many blacks in the South out of work. In addition, some local industrialists began recruiting African Americans from the South.

By mid-century, most African Americans in Milwaukee lived within one square mile in the central city—an area just south of today's Borchert Field—that was then known as Bronzeville. The exact boundaries of Bronzeville are disputed, but most locate them somewhere between Juneau and North Avenues and 3rd (as it was known at the time) and 12th Streets. Walnut Street was the community's business and entertainment center.

During the 1950s and 1960s, two government programs displaced most in this community. One program was the Urban Renewal Administration, which had been designed to improve central city housing. Many blocks in Bronzeville were slated for revitalization, and residents on these blocks were forced to sell their homes or were offered alternative housing in other areas of the city. During the same time period, the Milwaukee County Expressway Commission was building two major freeway corridors in the heart of the city. One cut directly across Bronzeville, discarding Walnut Street as the center of the community.

Over 8,000 homes were lost as were nearly all of the scores of businesses and organizations on or near Walnut Street. Many of the displaced residents of Bronzeville moved north into the Harambee neighborhood and from there some moved north and west. Many ended up in Borchert Field.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, over 8 in 10 residents in the Borchert Field neighborhood are African Americans. Approximately 1 in 10 residents are Latinos (evenly divided between people of Puerto Rican and Mexican backgrounds). In addition, there is a scattering of European Americans (nearly all of German ancestry) and people of multiple backgrounds in the neighborhood. Borchert Field is also young, with nearly 4 in 10 residents under the age of 20. The neighborhood has significantly more women than men.

Over three-quarters of the residents in Borchert Field live in low and low middle-income households, where the annual income is under \$50,000. The most common occupations in the neighborhood are in the fields of healthcare support, sales, and personal care. In fact, there are over three times the number of residents in the healthcare support field than other areas in Milwaukee. Ten people in Borchert Field list their major occupation as farming.

Approximately two-thirds of all property units in Borchert Field are likely to be rented. Rents are modest with over three-quarters of the units going for under \$1,000, and many of these are under \$500. Homes are also modestly priced. Over three-quarters of homes have select costs (e.g., mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, taxes, insurance) between \$500 and \$1,500 a month.

NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURE

- **Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church**, at 1345 W. Burleigh St., a community-activist church that hosts meetings of the C.A.R.E.S. program (see above).

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.

JUNETEENTH DAY			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
June 19, daytime	Along Martin Luther King Dr. between Center and Burleigh Sts.	Celebration of the US holiday that commemorates the day in 1865 when the end of slavery was announced in Texas, with everything African American—the food, families, music, clothes, dance, exhibits, crafts, art, and a parade.	Free

BRONZEVILLE WEEK			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Aug., 2nd week	MLK Dr., between Garfield Ave. and Center St.	Cultural and arts festival, with a run/walk run, health screenings, trolley rides, arts night, poetry readings.	Free

HARAMBEE COMMUNITY MARKET			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jun.-early Oct., Sat. 12-4pm	Rose Park, 3045 N. MLK Jr. Dr.	Fresh food from Wisconsin farms, baked goods, crafts, art.	Free

LOCUST STREET FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND ART			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jun., Sun. 11am-8pm	Locust St. between Humboldt & Holton	Featuring six live music venues and a variety of food, artists and vendors with up to 30,000 people.	Free

BRONZEVILLE JAZZ IN THE HOOD			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jul., Fri. 4-9pm	4th St. between North and Garfield	Celebration of African-American culture that focuses on local creative entrepreneurial talent with art performances.	Free

WALK THROUGH OLD BRONZEVILLE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, by appt., 1:30-4	Lapham Park Apartments and Senior Center 1901 N. 6th St.	Visit to replica of the once thriving Walnut Street, the heart of Bronzeville, in lower level of Lapham Center. To reserve time, call (414) 286-8859	Free

CENTER STREET DAYS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Aug., Sat. all day	Center St. between Humboldt Ave. & Holton St.	Music, food, arts, crafts, cart race, car show.	Free

KWANZAA

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

FREE FAMILY SWIM

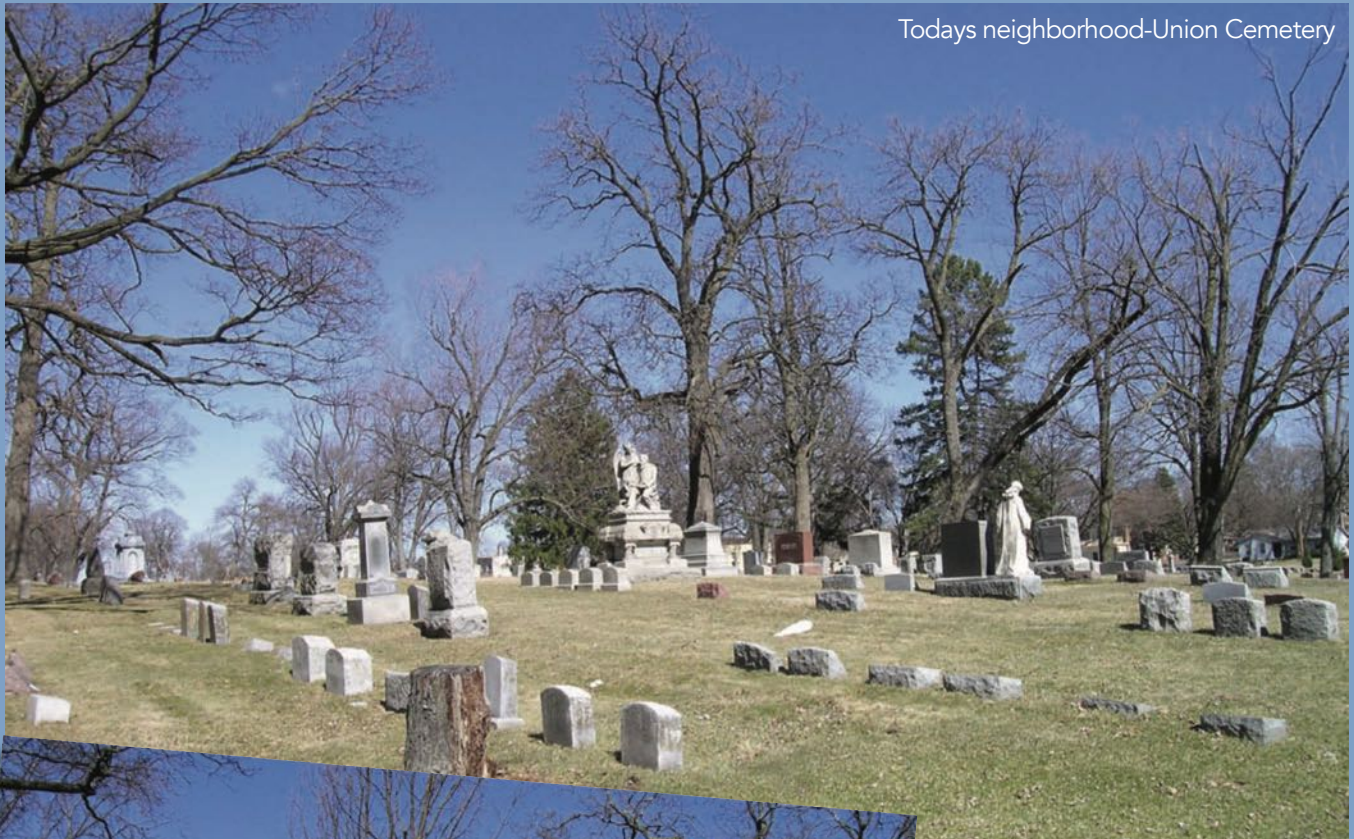
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Wed. 7:05-8:15pm	North Division H.S., 1011 W. Center St., enter west side of bldg.	Swimming. Children 7 and under must be accompanied by adult. Swim caps can be purchased at site. 267-5077.	Free

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 in the Borchert Field neighborhood and would like to add an interesting quote about this area, please send an email to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Union Cemetery



Today's neighborhood-Houses at
12th & Concordia

Today's neighborhood-Houses at
16th & Burleigh





Today's neighborhood-Houses at 13th & Ring

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

¹¹ Image attribution: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borchert_Field#/media/File:BorchertField_1911.jpg