

**Approximate boundaries:**  
N-W. Layton Ave; S-W. Edgerton Ave;  
E-I-94; W-S. 27th St

# FAR SOUTH SIDE *Castle Manor*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Castle Manor is a neighborhood of moderate population density. Home architectural styles include the 1950s to 1970s ranch, with a few early 20th century bungalows. There is a business corridor along the western border of the neighborhood on South 27th Street. The streets follow a rectangular grid with the exception of a small portion of South 19th Street that winds south for about a block.

There are no public parks in the neighborhood. The main green space is an empty field just south of Layton Avenue and west of the freeway. See neighborhood photos below.

## HISTORY

Castle Manor is one far south side neighborhood among many that makes up today's Garden District. The boundaries of the Garden District are those of the 13th Aldermanic District. All Garden District neighborhoods were once part of the Town of Lake, with boundaries of Lake Michigan to South 27th Street and Greenfield to College Avenues. By the mid-1950s, the City of Milwaukee had annexed the areas that today encompass the Garden District.

### Early populations

Many of the far south side neighborhoods that comprise today's Garden District owe a debt to the dreams of a local Norwegian named John Saveland. Saveland owned a booming business on Water Street that provided provisions for fishing boats, steamships, and schooners that sailed from Milwaukee. And he also had an interest in real estate. In 1887 Saveland organized a group of investors that purchased 30 acres of land bordered by today's Bradley, Howard, Whitnall, and Howell. The group hoped to attract upper middle class home buyers to their project—people who would work in the city and retire to their county estates at the end of the work day.

But despite a convenient Milwaukee streetcar with stops along Howell Avenue, few lots were sold in the early days. Saveland ultimately turned some of the land into a recreational venture, with an amusement hall and grounds. It wasn't until the time of Saveland's death in 1909 that the area was finally beginning to attract settlers. These were not the upper middle class professionals that Saveland had expected, but south side working class people—mostly Poles.

Housing was reaching the far south side in the early 20th century, but it wasn't until the end of World War II that the housing market really began to boom. Newly arriving settlers were migrating from near south side and historic south side neighborhoods—mostly Poles, some Germans, and later in the century, Latinos. The Castle Manor area was relatively slow in this development trend. By 1955 the neighborhood had just over 70 residences. Most of the settlers were Polish and German, but with a significant scattering of Russians, Irish, English, Hungarians, Norwegians, and Austrians. See the randomly selected resident profile below.



Today's neighborhood—  
Older bungalow on 20th St.

## Castle Manor random resident (1950s)

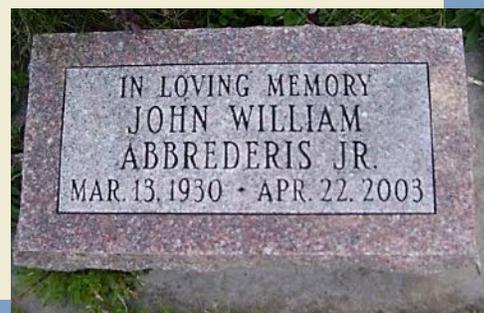
*Names selected randomly from the 1955 City Directory in the Castle Manor area  
(photos and other information were found in public records in Ancestry.com)*

### John William Abbrederis, Jr.

Sometime during the 1950s, 25-year-old John William Abbrederis, Jr. moved to 4746 South 27th Street in today's Castle Manor neighborhood. There are no records on Ancestry.com of him marrying or having children. He had grown up with his family in West Allis. His father, John William Abbrederis, Sr., was an immigrant from Austria who had worked at times as a laborer and at times as a salesman. For a few years the family had operated a farm in Racine. John Jr.'s mother, Nora Abbrederis (nee Redman) was a homemaker with ancestry in Indiana. Also present in John Jr.'s natal home were siblings Alice, Mary, Frances, Frank, and Edward.

During the 20th century, there was only one extended Abbrederis family settled in West Allis. In 1990, an Abbrederis of some acclaim was born in this town--Jared Abbrederis. His parents, Lisa and Scott Abbrederis, eventually moved to Wautoma, Wisconsin. At Wautoma High School, Jared became a three-time letter winner in football. He entered college and became a star receiver for the Badgers at the University of Wisconsin, breaking records in number of career receptions, career kickoff return yards, and highest average for kickoff return in a single game. He was later drafted by the Green Bay Packers. Due to injuries, he was waived by the Packers in 2016. He later signed a reserve contract with the Detroit Lions. Abbrederis retired in 2018.

It is not known how long John William Abbrederis, Jr. lived in the Castle Manor neighborhood. Other members of his family were moving away from West Allis and relocating in Wisconsin rural towns. John Jr. later moved to Sheldon, Wisconsin where he had relatives within a few miles. He died in 2003 and was buried near family members at Kennan, Wisconsin.



## Businesses in Castle manor

In 1955, Castle Manor had only eight businesses, and most of these were on South 27th Street. See list below.

Addresses on S. 27th in Castle Manor area	Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory
4720	Gilbert J. Krews Gas Station
4739	Boulevard Garage Auto Repair
4777	Highway 47 Bar & Bowl Tavern (Frank Ramsak)
4824	Liberty School

Castle Manor's area development would increase in the next decade. By the mid-1960s there were thousands of small ranch houses and cape cods extending to and beyond the Castle Manor neighborhood. The population would gradually become more diverse for two reasons. First, Milwaukee Latinos continued migrating south from the Near South Side in the 1970s and 1980s. Second, the founding of the Islamic Center of Milwaukee in 1982 attracted Muslims from the Middle East and Northern Africa.

### Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, Castle Manor has just over 4,000 residents. Approximately half are European Americans (most still of German and Polish ancestry). Just under 3 in 10 are Latinos (mostly Mexican, but including quite a few Puerto Ricans) and about 1 in 20 are Asians (including Filipinos, Hmong, Asian Indians, Pakistanis, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Chinese). There is also a scattering of American Indians, indigenous Africans, Egyptians, African Americans, Arabs, Palestinians, and people of multiple backgrounds in the area.

The median household income in Castle Manor is just over \$40,000 a year, placing the neighborhood in the lower middle income stratum. The largest number of occupations claimed by residents are in the fields of sales, administration, material moving, and production. Over twice as many residents are in the fields of health technicians, law enforcement, and material moving than the proportions in other Milwaukee areas.

Gardening is a major hobby among Castle Manor residents—a tradition carried over from the time when the neighborhood was part of the Town of Lake. In 2008, the Common Council approved a resolution to name all the neighborhoods in the 13th Aldermanic District the *Garden District* of the City of Milwaukee, capitalizing on a long tradition of gardening among residents and businesses. At the time, Alderman Witkowski said, "Residents and businesses here have worked hard to solidify this identity. We have had perennial



Today's neighborhood—Houses on 18th & Halsey



Today's neighborhood—Houses on 19th & Holmes

exchanges and gatherings, lectures by noted gardeners, and even awarded area businesses landscaping awards to encourage and foster the character of our area." The idea for the Garden District grew from discussions between the alderman and residents about the interest in and tradition of gardening and landscaping within the district. The effort began in earnest in early 2007, when a group of individuals formalized a garden

committee and met regularly to create a vision for the 13th Aldermanic District that focused on gardening and landscaping to beautify and improve quality-of-life.

### GARDEN DISTRICT FARMERS MARKET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun. through mid-Oct., Sat.'s 1-5pm	Just south of Howard on 6th St.	Market of fresh vegetables and other vendors.	Free

### GARDEN DISTRICT CRAFT FAIR

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Apr., Sat. 9am-3pm	3333 S. Howell	Fair of over 25 vendors, concessions, prizes, bake sale, and more.	unk

### SLEDDING--WILSON

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Winter, daytime	Wilson Recreation, 4001 S. 20th St.	Sledding hills for family and friends.	Free

### GLOW SKATE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Dec., Fri. 7:30-9pm	Wilson Park Arena, 4001 S 20th St.	Skating, glow-in-the-dark necklaces, holiday lights, music, prize drawings and a gourmet hot-chocolate bar (skate rentals available).	unk

### JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--WILSON

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4th, 9am-10pm	Wilson Park, 1601 W. Howard Ave.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, music, games, fireworks.	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

### **Quotes from an ongoing oral history of the Garden District by Urban Anthropology Inc.<sup>1</sup>—about THEN**

“If there were single people in households when I was growing up, I didn’t know about it. It would have been a working father and a stay-at-home mother. There always would have been two parents. It was a fairly stable environment from that standpoint. Today you have more single individuals and unmarried couples living together. There are people from the LGBT community living here. The stay-at-home mom has gone away. And families need two people working, it seems, to make a go.”

### **Quotes from an ongoing oral history of the Garden District by Urban Anthropology Inc.—about NOW**

“From what I’ve seen at neighborhood gatherings there is a pride in the neighborhood. It forces people to come together and see that everyone wants a safe, comfortable place to live and raise their children. I think people take pride in things getting done. If there is a crime problem you get something done about it—you have a liaison from the police come in and talks to our groups. There’s grants where you can beautify your home and park. There’s matching grants. We are in an area where there is less segregation and more diversity and people take pride in this.”

“Of course there are differences. We share our differences. When they have something special they share it. When we have something special we share it. When something happens like Christmas, or St. Patrick, or Halloween, we share it. . . We go to their churches. They come to our mosque. We have meetings. We help with cleaning the neighborhood, help elderly people, all that. None of this was like that when I first came.”

“Without the gardens, there would not be the same kind of opportunity for interaction. Every time there is something new it creates an opportunity for people to get to know one another. Kids and families meet each other. Doors Open [Milwaukee] has done a lot to orient people to each other.”

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<sup>1</sup> 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*.

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](mailto:jflanthropologist@currently.com)

OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS



Gardening at 20th & Layton during the 1940s. (Photo courtesy of Dennis Lukaszewski)