

**Approximate boundaries:**  
N-W. Vliet St; S-W. Highland Blvd;  
E-N. 27<sup>th</sup> St; W-N. 35<sup>th</sup> St

# WEST SIDE *Cold Spring Park*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Cold Spring Park is a densely populated neighborhood that is mainly residential. The major housing type is the two-story duplex. Built mostly in the early 20th century, the architectural styles of these duplexes are mainly Queen Anne and Tudor, with a few done in the colonial style. In many parts of the neighborhood, the Elizabethan Revival and Arts and Crafts styles have also been employed. In addition to the duplexes, there is a small number of multi-unit apartments that appear to have been built in the 1960s and 1970s. The neighborhood has a modest business district along North 35th Street between Vliet and Juneau, and on Vliet Street.

Cold Spring Park's topography is mainly flat with interspersed rolling hills throughout. There is no public park or school playground in the neighborhood but there is a community garden located at 28th and West McKinley Boulevard.

## HISTORY

Cold Spring Park, originally part of the unincorporated Town of Wauwatosa, had several incarnations.

### Early populations

The earliest population wave to arrive in the Cold Spring Park area was neither American Indian, German, nor Yankee. The majority of the first settlers were Hackneys, Saddlebreds, and Standardbreds. That is because Cold Spring Park in its earliest incarnation was a race track.

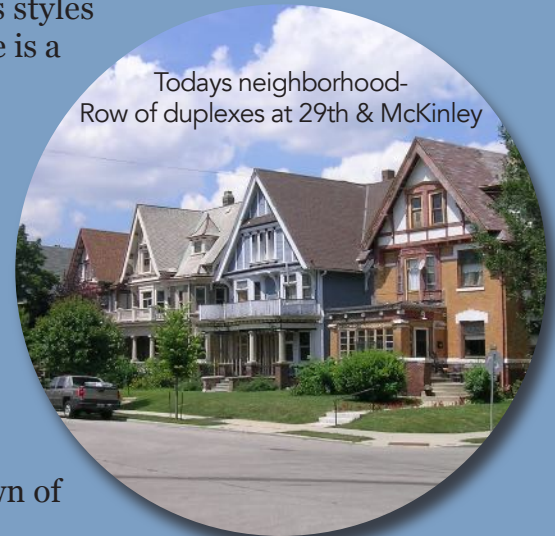
### *The Cold Spring Park Course*

Built in 1849, the race tracks that covered nearly the entire area that is today's Cold Spring Park neighborhood hosted harness races, carnivals, traveling circuses, and early Wisconsin State Fairs. It had been built on the Cold Spring Farm that was named for a spring of fresh, cold water in its northwestern section. The spring failed following the construction of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad tracks nearby. No doubt this event played a role in the sale of the farm lands.

The initial one-mile oval track and another one-half mile track were on the course site, as well as outbuildings, stables, and the attendant Cold Spring Hotel. Both the tracks and the hotel quickly earned dubious reputations because of the gambling and prostitution they harbored. The main track event was harness racing, as Milwaukee boasted approximately 300 owners of trotting rigs. Besides the local residents who participated in the races, the track drew nationally known horses, which in turn drew more spectators and gamblers to the course. A celebrity horse, Goldsmith Maid, set a world speed record at the site when she trotted the one-mile track in 2 minutes and 17 seconds.

Other events at the course included baseball games, bicycle races, circuses, boxing matches, and even a failed balloon air wedding. The site also hosted the Wisconsin State Fair a dozen times before the event moved to its permanent home in West Allis.

The advent of the Civil War signaled the second incarnation of Cold Spring Park.



## *Camp Washburn*

Beginning in 1861, the race course housed the 2nd Calvary, 30th Infantry, and 39th Regiment, and became a training camp for thousands of Wisconsin soldiers. Camp Washburn saw the training of the 28th, 34th, 35th, 39th, 43rd, 48th and 51st Wisconsin VI, the 2nd Wisconsin Cavalry, and the 13th Battery Wisconsin Light Artillery.

The camp was one of four sites in Milwaukee chosen for Civil War military encampments—the others being Holton/Reno, Scott, and Trowbridge. On the Washburn site, the military constructed barracks, a guardhouse, an officers' quarters, a small hospital, a suttlery (soldier's store), and auxiliary buildings.

But problems would ensue. In 1864, muddy ground forced the 30th infantry to move to Camp Reno near the lakefront. The following year, many of the camp structures were destroyed by fire. By 1866, the Wisconsin Agricultural and Mechanical Association was again operating the park as a racetrack. After the war, the remains of the barracks, hospital, and other buildings were turned into stables for 125 to 150 horses, housing for trainers, and outbuildings for racing supplies.

The track remained in operation until the last decade of the 19th century. A third incarnation would follow.

### *A neighborhood and historic district*

By 1891, the Cold Spring Race Course was being subdivided into lots. Most of the newly arriving residents were Germans. Migrations were spurred by the development of Washington Park just northwest of Cold Spring Park neighborhood that attracted settlers in larger numbers. In its earliest decades, Washington Park offered a modest horse racing track, carriage rides, band shell, a lovely lagoon, and a zoo. The zoo had humble 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. By 1910, the Cold Spring Park neighborhood and others near Washington Park were nearly filled to capacity.

### *McKinley Boulevard*

The new settlers to Cold Spring Park continued to be mainly Germans, migrating in from Milwaukee's central, eastern, and northern neighborhoods. Not all were working class. One area attracted a number of wealthier residents. The street that had been designated as Cold Spring Boulevard (between North 27th and North 35th Streets) during track times was renamed McKinley Drive after President William McKinley who visited Milwaukee in 1899. During the visit, the President made flattering statements about Milwaukeeans. He was assassinated in Buffalo, New York three years later (no implied connection).

The homes that were constructed on McKinley had Elizabethan Revival and Arts and Crafts influences. The list of architects who designed the houses is like a who's who of German-American architectural firms in Milwaukee: Charles f. Ringer, Henry Messmer & Son, John Menge, Jr., Gustave A. Dick, Fred Graf, Otto C. Uehling, Charles Tharinger, Julius Leiser and Charles Holst, and Herman W. Buemming. Because their McKinley Boulevard clients were wealthy and also of German ancestry, the architectural styles tended to have an old-world look. A common feature was the end gable designed with half-timbering and stucco, reminiscent of the German Medieval half-timbering.

The owners of the homes were also like a who's who of elite German-American families. See a profile of one below.

## Cold Spring Park family profile (early 20th century)

*(Information from census and other public records)*

### The Zimmermanns

In 1905, George Emil Zimmermann built a house at 3102 West McKinley. The residence was a side-gable block with two large gabled dormers facing the street.

George, the son of German immigrants, was born in 1863 in Hartford, Wisconsin. He moved to Milwaukee and took up the occupation of sewer construction—a most lucrative trade in the days of Milwaukee's great expansion. George was soon running his own sewage building and pipe fitting company. *(See photo<sup>i</sup> of example of early sewer construction to right.)*

In 1887, George married Mary Werner, born 1869, and also the daughter of German immigrants. The couple initially purchased a home on North 12th Street, where they had two children, Florence and LeRoy (or Roy George).

By 1905, the Zimmermanns were able to pay cash for their home on West McKinley, where they maintained at least one servant. In addition, the Zimmermanns traveled a lot, including vacations in Florida and Europe.

Sometime in the 1920s, the Zimmermanns apparently sold the McKinley home, as George and Mary were living in a house on Wisconsin Avenue by 1930—again with a servant. There is no evidence that either of their children remained at the McKinley family home. Florence married a man named Mench and no other records were found for her. LeRoy (Roy George) followed his father into the sewage contracting business, married Gretchen Rowley, had at least three children, and moved to an expensive home on West State Street by 1930. Within three years, he had relocated his family and business to Louisville, Kentucky. He later retired in Florida.

George Zimmerman died in 1936, and like many successful German-American businessmen, was buried at the Forest Home Cemetery. His wife Mary lived nearly 30 years longer. She died in 1962 at age 93 and was also buried at Forest Home.



Other upper income German Americans that purchased homes on McKinley Boulevard during the first decade of the 20th century included Edwin F. Rohn at 2908 West McKinley, Henry Hase at 2920 West McKinley, Fred Lichfeldt at 2923 West McKinley, and Richard Bucholz at 3120 West McKinley. Unlike the Zimmermann home, these residences had gabled ends as the dominant design feature, and there was a varied use of masonry materials including brick, stone and terra cotta.

### *Businesses in early Cold Spring Park*

As the neighborhood attracted more settlers, it also drew resident-serving businesses. By 1936 there were no businesses on North 35th Street, but there was a relatively strong commercial corridor on West Vliet Street. As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods, the shopkeepers were considerably more diverse than the residents on the surrounding blocks. These included Irish, Swedes, Swiss, Chinese, Romanians, Canadians, Dutch, and of course German. See summary and notes below.

<i>Addresses on W. Vliet St. in Cold Spring Park in 1936</i>	<i>Businesses, offices, apartments, organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
3100	Knut Johnson Groceries and Meats
3101	Adolph L. Pfeiffer Barber
3102	Knut Johnson Brothers Exporters
3102A	Louis J. Ritzenthaler Dentist
3104	Arthur T. Koepke Dentist Wisconsin Petroleum Industries Committee Charles W. O'Connor Insurance Agency
3106	Leiby Sales Corporation Electric Suppliers
3107	Frank Cesar Baker
3109	Vacant
3132	Fred Schneeberger Tavern
3202	Water Kollmorgen Patternmaker Milwaukee Wax Products
3204	Cream City Heating and Supply Company
3216	Vliet Street Used Automobile Parts Company
3220	Pat's Beer Depot
3235	Vacant
3237	Robert Felber Company Inc. Coal
3251	Layfayette Yakes Bowling and Tavern
3302	B. Collins & Son Filling Station
3326	Axel Stromquist Restaurant
3326A	Joseph Sperl Garment Manufacturing Company
3329	Black Eagle Oil Company Service Station
3332	Simon Mauch Delicatessen

<i>Addresses on W. Vliet St. in Cold Spring Park in 1936</i>	<i>Businesses, offices, apartments, organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
3416	John Hoe Barber
3418	Jaeger's Garage
3419	Great Lakes Wrecking and Lumber Company Great Lakes Lumber & Fuel Company Nick Halicky Construction Company
3420	Ward Baking Company
3420A	Apartments
3422	William H. Opitz Restaurant Richard's Badger Packard Machinery Company Chicago Pneumatic Tool Company
3424	Sunlight Tavern
3425	Badger Engraving Company Inc.
3429	Richard's Badger Packard Company Richard's Badger Packard Company Shop
3430	Cietus K. Ziegler Physician Gerald Davies Dentist
3430	Apartments
3432	Henry W. Marx Real Estate Milwaukee Investment Corporation Eagle Glen Farms Inc.
3433	Harold Eggert Tavern

### Summary and notes from census and other records:

- As in most other Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants. Most also lived at the same addresses as their stores or within a block of them.
- Knut Johnson, with the grocery and meat store, was a nurse by profession. He was born in Michigan, the son of Swedish immigrants. Typical of most Milwaukee shopkeepers, he had gone as far as the 8th grade in school
- Charles W. O'Connor, the insurance agent, was the grandson of Irish immigrants.
- Frank Cesar, the baker, was an immigrant from Austria.
- Fred Schneeberger, with the tavern, was an immigrant from Switzerland. He'd been a "seamstress" before opening his bar.
- Axel Stromquist, with the restaurant, had recently moved from MN to Milwaukee. The son of Swedish immigrants, he had worked as a cook in Lake Ward, MN before the move.



- Lafayette Yakes, with the bowling alley and bar, was the son of a Canadian immigrant. He'd lived in MI before he moved to Wisconsin. Like almost all the shopkeepers, he had completed the 8th grade.
- Joseph Sperl, with the garment manufacturing company, was a German immigrant.
- The only possible candidate for John Hoe, the barber, was an immigrant from China.
- Nick Halicky, with the construction company, was an immigrant from Romania.
- William Opitz, with the restaurant, was a bricklayer before opening his business. He was the son of German immigrants.
- Henry W. Marx, the real estate agent, was the son of a Dutch immigrant. He was an anomaly among shopkeepers because he had gone to high school.
- Harold Eggert, with the tavern, had worked as an auto mechanic before opening his tavern. Nothing was found on his ancestry.

### *The arrival of African Americans*

In the second half of the 20th century African Americans began to migrate to the Cold Spring Park area. This happened for two reasons: (1) the need for housing following the razing of over 8,000 homes in the African American Bronzeville community in the late 1950s through the mid-1960s ([see Halyard Park neighborhood](#)), and (2) the availability of family-supporting jobs in industry in the Menomonee Valley and other west side neighborhoods. The integration of the new population proceeded relatively smoothly. Many African American families were able to purchase homes and move into the middle class.

Unfortunately, the deindustrialization movement that began in the 1980s arrested this course. Manufacturing employment in Milwaukee fell 77 percent, from a peak in 1963 to the present. A neighborhood that had once been a haven for some of Milwaukee's wealthiest citizens was now in decline.

### *Designation of historical district*

On November 17, 1987, the City of Milwaukee designated the area along West McKinley Boulevard between 27th and 35th Streets as the Cold Spring Park Historic District. According to City documents:

The Cold Spring Park Historic District is significant for both its architectural and its historical associations. It is architecturally significant for its early twentieth century domestic architecture. It is historically significant as part of an early city planning phenomenon that created a system of landscaped boulevards to serve as links between the major parks and to restrict undesirable traffic. This resulted in residential streets that were distinguished from the established street grid by their width, landscaped treatment and unusually high quality residential architecture. In its day, McKinley Boulevard was one of the most distinguished residential addresses in the city.

## **Current populations (as of 2021)**

Today there are just over 2,500 residents living within Cold Spring Park's boundaries. Of these, over 6 in 10 are African Americans. Over 1 in 10 are European Americans, and most of these claim mixed European or German ancestry, as in the past. The neighborhood also has a substantial Latino population (approximately 1 in 12), and most of these are of Mexican extraction. In addition,

approximately 1 in 15 residents are Asians (mostly of Hmong/Lao ancestry). The remaining residents are indigenous Africans, and people of multiple backgrounds.

The median household income of residents is just under \$18,000 annually, placing the neighborhood in the low-income stratum. The leading occupations claimed by residents are in the fields of production, administration, and facilities (grounds cleaning, building, and maintenance). The neighborhood has over two times the number of people employed as firefighters than the proportion in other Milwaukee areas.

Rents are very reasonable in Cold Spring Park. The median neighborhood rent is \$600 a month, compared to \$666 for Milwaukee generally. The median value of detached houses in Cold Spring Park is just over \$92,000 compared to just over \$210,000 in Wisconsin generally, and the median value of housing units in 2-unit houses is nearly \$52,000 per unit compared to nearly \$143,000 in Wisconsin generally.

### 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.

TOUR OF TRIPOLI SHRINE TEMPLE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
By reservation of groups of 10 or more	3000 W. Wisconsin Ave.	Forty-five minute tour of majestic temple built in 1928 with all its ornate fixtures. Lunch buffet included.	unk

HOLIDAY PAGEANT			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Dec., Fri. 5:30-7pm	Neighborhood House, 2819 W. Richardson Pl.	Art activities, games, vendors, kids' performances, lite dinner, and more. Register with Tasha at (414) 933-6161 x142	Free

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

WINTERFEST FOR AFTERNOON NAPPERS			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jan. 10:30am-12pm, see website for dates	Washington Park, 1859 N. 40th St.	Opportunity for children ages 5 and under accompanied of adult to enjoy a morning of fun including a craft, hike and puppet show and still get home in time for afternoon nap.	unk

### WASHINGTON PARK 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 PARK

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

### FALL FAMILY PADDLE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Sep., Sat., 1-3pm	Washington Park, 1859 N. 40th St.	Celebration of autumn with guided canoeing and nature on lovely lagoon. Requires early registration.	unk

### 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

### ECO ART WEDNESDAYS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Weds., 4-5:30pm	Menomonee Valley 3700 W. Pierce	Children work on nature-inspired recycled arts and crafts. Take home own creation every week! Register at Urban Ecology website.	unk

### MILWAUKEE BREWERS GAMES

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Apr. to late Sep., see website for times	American Family Field, 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 Washington Park for birds.	Free, but might 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

### CROSS COUNTRY SKIING FOR KIDS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jan. Thu. 4-6pm	Menomonee Valley, 3700 W. Pierce St.	Bring children to workshop designed just for kids to learn all they need to know before hitting the slopes, with gear provided. Register at Urban Ecology website.	unk

### FAMILY HIKE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mar. & Apr, Nov, Tue.'s 4-6pm	Menomonee Valley, 3700 W. Pierce St.	Guided hike to see changes in seasons through 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)

## LYNDEN HILL/MILWAUKEE T.R.E.E. HOUSE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily	2130 W. McKinley Ave.	Opportunity to explore a natural setting.	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 this neighborhood and wish to make an interesting observation about it, please send your quote to [JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)*

### PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 33rd & Juneau



Today's neighborhood-  
Row of duplexes at 30th & Juneau



Today's neighborhood-  
Row of duplexes at 29th & McKinley



Today's neighborhood-Cold Spring Park Garden



Today's neighborhood-  
Lifestyle Center on 28th & W. Highland Blvd.



Today's neighborhood-St. Luke Emanuel Baptist Church at 27th & W. Highland Blvd.

<sup>i</sup> Photo attribution: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/64/Men\\_in\\_north\\_trunk\\_sewer\\_siphon\\_tunnel\\_Seattle\\_1913.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/64/Men_in_north_trunk_sewer_siphon_tunnel_Seattle_1913.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:  
JFLanthropologist@currently.com