

Approximate boundaries:

N-E. Ogden Ave (partial) E. State St; **S**-E. Clybourn St;
E-E-Lincoln Memorial Dr; **W**-Milwaukee River

DOWNTOWN *East Town*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

East Town (also known as Juneau Town) is a densely populated neighborhood with a variety of housing styles. There are many 19th century houses in the Tudor, Queen Anne and Italianate styles integrated with multi-unit apartment buildings and newer condos. The neighborhood has some wide boulevards with green space in the medians. The streets generally follow a grid pattern; the exceptions to this are Water Street and Prospect Avenue. Water Street tracks the bend of the river and Prospect Avenue follows the curve of the bluff over Lake Michigan along Juneau Park. The topography is flat except for a hill that slopes down to the river beginning around Jefferson Street.

Most of Juneau Park is in East Town. There are two monuments in Juneau Park--one is a statue of Solomon Juneau and the other of Leif Erikson. Cathedral Square is a small park in the center of the neighborhood and hosts numerous events throughout the year (see outings section and neighborhood photos below).

HISTORY

East Town owes its origins to Solomon Juneau. In the 1830s Juneau platted the village of Milwaukee and settled there. He began selling plots of land in what was becoming known as Juneau Town. He set the location for downtown when he and his wife Josette opened a trading post at today's Water Street and Wisconsin Avenue.

Juneau went on to become the first mayor of Milwaukee in 1846 and the city's first postmaster. He also built Milwaukee's first store and first inn, and founded the *Milwaukee Sentinel*.

Solomon Juneau was French and his wife Josette was French and part Menomonee by ancestry. However, the first populations to settle in East Town during the city's early development were neither French nor Native.

Early populations

The earliest groups to make their homes in East Town were Germans and Irish. While many Yankees from New England and New York came to the Milwaukee area, most built homes just north of East Town in Yankee Hill. Germans began arriving in large numbers in the 1830s before Milwaukee was even a city. When Solomon Juneau became Milwaukee's first mayor in 1846, the inaugural address was printed in both English and German. As today, the Germans were remarkably diverse in cultural practices, social class, and religion.

While some Irish had been in the United States prior to the American Revolution, a large wave of Irish immigrants arrived during and shortly after the Irish Potato Famine of 1845 to 1852. Many of those who came to Milwaukee took jobs in the Third Ward. Many others found homes in East Town. The Irish and the Germans tended to settle in East Town and elsewhere in the Milwaukee area in their own colonies.



Today's neighborhood-Statue of Solomon Juneau at Juneau Park

Early on, Water Street became the major commercial corridor in East Town because it ran parallel to the Milwaukee River, providing access to trade. Before the development of railroads and highways in the city, water was the main medium for transportation. One of the more successful enterprises to arise along the east bluffs of the Milwaukee River was the Blatz Brewing Company. Operating from 1851 to 1959, Blatz was an early innovator in bottling and national shipping. Its founder, Valentin Blatz, was a Bavarian German immigrant who had learned many industrial techniques in his home country to advance the brewing industry.

As more forms of transportation matured, the main commercial corridor in East Town gradually moved from Water Street to East Wisconsin Avenue. The type of businesses and offices that populated this stretch of land would end up being very different from those that would populate the blocks just to the west. With the new businesses came new populations—often immigrants or children of immigrants from France, Scandinavia, Scotland, and England—as well as more incoming Germans and Irish, who remained the majority populations.

East Wisconsin Avenue

By the 1920s East Wisconsin Avenue had become the center for brokerage houses, law firms, banks, insurance offices, expensive boutiques, and wholesaler contractors. Below is a list of the offices, businesses, and organizations on Wisconsin Avenue between Water Street and approximately Broadway in 1926. See summary and notes below.

<i>Addresses on E. Wisconsin Ave. in 1926</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
60	Famous Shoe Hospital
61	Miller Block Hat shop
62	S. W. Straus & Company Investments
63	Caspari & Virmond Shoes
64	Campbell-Boll Company Shoes
66-68	M St P & SS Railway general agents Soo Line Canadian Pacific Railway
67	The Utility Ladies Furnishings
68	Trust Company Building
68 basement	William Graetz Barber Rose Beam Manicurist
68 first floor	Albert Beillfuss Cigars
68 offices	First Wisconsin Trust Company Association The Quarles Company Investments First Wisconsin Trust Company Louis J. Pettit Banker Prudential Insurance Company Manford W. McMillen Insurance Sidney J. Herzberg Insurance William C. Weisher Insurance Albert J. Schultz Insurance

Addresses on W. Grand Ave. between 6th and 10th in 1926	Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory
68 offices (cont.)	Western Line & Cement Company Ernest E. Rogers Real Estate Reserve Offices Association Wisconsin Citizens Military Training Corp. Association USA Headquarters 101 Division Parker-McNulty Company Construction Engineers Peat, Marwick, Mitchell Accountants Lines, Sooner & Quarles Bottum, Hudnail, Lecher & McNamara Attorneys Wisconsin Hide Company Richard S. Boemer Broker
68 offices (cont.)	Andrew D. Agnew Lawyer Morgan, La France & Rothman Lawyers Alexander, Burke & Clark Lawyers Freks [Frederick] W. Barton Lawyer American Adjustment Company Collections Frank E. Dennett Lawyer Union Credit Company Agency Jacob P. Buescher Lawyer Lewis E. Curtis Construction Engineer Robert Blackburn Wholesale Lumber White Construction Company George R. Alexander Lawyer Lloyd L. Livingston Lawyer John E. Kohler Insurance Fred H. Tschientschy Insurance Bakery Exchange Nicholas Koch Real Estate Anton Dohmen Architect Ira Milton Jones Patent Attorney Winding Roofing Inc.
68 offices (cont.)	J. G. White & Company Investments John F. Alexander Investments Everett C. Smith Wholesale Lumber John C. Smith Wholesale Lumber Emde-Brah Coal Sales Company Eugene E. Wallace Lumber Mary E. Kane Public Stenographer Rolfe Insurance Adjustment Company Bennett & Burns Lawyers Olaf E. Anderson Tailor Fred J. A. Christianson's Roofing Contractor Henry H. Browner Real Estate

<i>Addresses on W. Grand Ave. between 6th and 10th in 1926</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
68 offices (cont.)	Astor Realty Company Charles T. Hickox Lawyer Bankers Public Company The Midwestern Banker Ventnor Corporation Real Estate Reilly, Penner & Benton Accountants Elwell Kiekhofer & Company Accountant Olof E. Anderson Tailor Shop

Notes from census and other public records:

- The number of financial institutions in this single block reflects the boom times of the 1920s.
- While many of the financial brokers and attorneys had formal educations, quite a few shop keepers and insurance agents had not even attended high school.
- Most of the professionals and shopkeepers were immigrants or children of immigrants. They came from diverse backgrounds.
- It is very likely that Rose Beam, the manicurist, and William Graetz, the barber, had their shops in the basement specifically to serve the myriad of professionals at 68 E. Wisconsin Avenue. Rose lived on Jefferson at the time and William lived on Wright.
- Albert Beillfuss, a German immigrant, left behind his cigar store by 1930 and became a grocer.
- Louis J. Pettit, the banker, had been born in New York to an immigrant English mother and an immigrant French father. The Pettit descendants became very influential in Milwaukee.
- William C. Weisher, the insurance underwriter, was the son of German immigrants. He was born in Illinois.
- Richard S. Boemer, the broker, dealt in hides and skins. A son of a German immigrant father, Boemer lived on Sherman Boulevard. He had completed the 8th grade.
- Andrew D. Agnew, the attorney, was not Greek, as the name might imply. He was an Irish immigrant who lived in Shorewood. He had completed four years of college.
- Frederick W. Barton, the attorney, was born in Minnesota to an English immigrant mother.
- Frank E. Dennett, the patent attorney, had been born in Maine. He was one of just a few professionals on the block that was not an immigrant or child of an immigrant.
- George R. Alexander, the attorney, was born in South Dakota and was probably Scottish or Scots Irish.
- Fred Tschientschy, the insurance agent, was a German immigrant with an 8th grade education. He lived on Holton.
- Olaf Anderson, the tailor, was the son of Norwegian immigrants. He had completed the 5th grade.
- Mary E. Kane, the stenographer, was the daughter of Irish immigrants.
- Henry Browner, the real estate agent (and accountant), was born in England. His father was Danish. He had a college education.

ADVERTISEMENT

The Milwaukee Neighborhood Poster Series

Researched and designed by local artist, Rick Petrie

24" x 18", framed posters of select Milwaukee neighborhoods. Each: \$90 (free shipping)



The poster features a large, detailed stone carving of a cherub on the left. To the right, the title "East Town" is written in a large, elegant, orange script font. Below the title, several smaller inset photographs show various historic and modern buildings in the East Town neighborhood, including a tall clock tower and a large brick building. The background of the poster is a light, textured image of a city street.

MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOODS: *East Town*

East Town (also known as Juneau Town) is a densely populated neighborhood with a variety of housing styles. There are many 19th century houses in the Tudor, Queen Anne and Italianate styles mixed in with multi-unit apartment buildings and newer condos.

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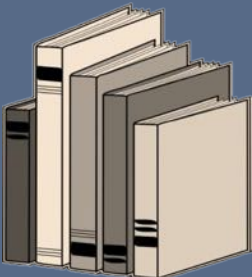
Early on Water Street became the major commercial corridor in East Town because it ran parallel to the Milwaukee River, providing access to trade.

One of the more successful enterprises to arise along the east bluffs of the Milwaukee River was the Blatz Brewing Company. Its founder, Valentin Blatz, was a Bavarian German immigrant who had learned many industrial techniques in his home country to advance the brewing industry.

Development in East Town slowed remarkably during the Great Depression and World War Two.

In the 1960s freeway development cleared large areas of land and removed many historic buildings. Two freeway corridors ended up separating East Town from its Third Ward and Lower East Side neighbors. Residents began protesting—not just in East Town but all over the city. Eventually downtown and East Side residents were able to halt the building of the Park East freeway.

By the 1980s, citizens' attitudes began to change about freeways, in part due to the New Urbanism movement stressing walkable streets that rose in popularity about this time. During the 1980s many projects changed the look of East Town, including downtown housing and a 3.1-mile Riverwalk. The removal of a stretch of the Park East freeway cleared the way for later infill development.



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<http://mecahmilwaukee.com/Artwork.html>

East Town random business owner (1926)

*Name selected randomly from the 1926 City Directory in the East Town area
(Information found in census records)*

Manford Weston McMillen

Manford McMillen, an insurance agent with Yankee roots, had an office at 68 East Wisconsin Avenue in 1926. He was 62 at the time. However, unlike other well-heeled Yankee transplants with business interests in downtown Milwaukee, Manford had a humble past. Manford's ancestors (likely Scots or Scots Irish) had lived in New York and New Hampshire. The father, Alexander McMillen, sired a large number of widely spaced children and apparently died before all of them had reached adulthood. As a result, Manford had joined the household of a brother 17 years his senior when he was in his teens. The brother at the time was living in Minnesota and working as a butcher.

Only completing the 8th grade, Manford married Edith G. Grubb in his 20s, had at least four children, and moved the family to Milwaukee. The family lived at various rented locations in an area that was then within the boundaries of the unincorporated Town of Wauwatosa. Records suggest that the McMillens struggled economically, as in 1905 they took in two German immigrant roomers.

However, the 1920s seemed to fare well for Manford McMillan, as he was able to afford office space among the many brokerage firms and law offices on East Wisconsin Avenue and listed himself as owner and manager of his insurance firm. But then followed the Great Depression, and, by 1932, Manford was working as an assistant manager for another company.

Sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s Manford McMillen and his wife moved to Saginaw, Michigan.

Development in East Town slowed remarkably during the Great Depression and World War II. The eastern stretch of Wisconsin Avenue eventually returned to health in the late 1940s.

However, East Town itself would take on an entirely different appearance in the 1960s. Freeway development cleared large areas of land and removed many historic buildings in the neighborhood. Two freeway corridors ended up separating East Town from its Third Ward and Lower East Side neighbors. Residents began protesting—not just in East Town but all over the city. Residents in Sherman Park achieved a major victory when they fought the creation of the Park West freeway, arguing that the county government was required to complete an impact statement before building. They won this battle. Eventually downtown and East Side residents were also able to halt the building of the Park East freeway. Freeway building slowed in the 1970s.

By the 1980s, citizens' attitudes began to change about freeways, in part due to the New Urbanism movement stressing walkable streets that rose in popularity about this time. One of the champions and leaders of this movement was John Norquist, who served as mayor of Milwaukee between 1988 and 2004. During his tenure, many of his projects changed the look of East Town, including downtown housing and a 3.1-mile Riverwalk (see photo). He also championed the removal of a 0.8 mile stretch of the Park East freeway, clearing the way for a later infill development. [See West Town neighborhood.](#)

How did all of this impact the current population makeup and practices of East Town?

Current populations (as of 2021)

Like many Milwaukee neighborhoods, the current population in East Town reflects its history. Did the New Urbanism influence walking patterns in this neighborhood? Apparently yes, as nearly one-quarter of residents say they walk to work, which is over five times the proportion of Milwaukeeans generally.

Did the neighborhood's history of brokerage houses, banks, and law offices influence today's occupations? Again, apparently yes, as the leading occupations cited by residents in East Town are in the fields of business, management, and sales; and the number of people in the legal profession is over three times the proportion for other Milwaukee areas.

Did the neighborhood's ethnic history influence its current makeup? Again, apparently yes. East Town has over 4,000 residents and of these, over 8 in 10 are European American, with Germans and Irish in the clear majority. The two nearby institutions of higher learning—Milwaukee School of Engineering and Marquette University—may have also influenced East Town's ethnic makeup, as nearly 1 in 15 residents are Asians, and 7 of 10 of these are Asian Indian (often in this country for education). In addition, about 1 in 20 residents are African American or Latino (mostly of Mexican ancestry).

The neighborhood also skews young. Nearly three-quarters of all residents are under age 35, suggesting that this is a popular living area for young professionals. There are also significantly more men than women in East Town.

Most residents are renters and over three-quarters of the rental units go for \$501 to \$1,500 a month. House and condo costs are not cheap. Select costs for over half the housing properties (e.g., mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, taxes, insurance) are over \$2,000 a month.

Household incomes fall into a bimodal pattern, probably reflecting the large numbers of students and professionals living side-by-side in East Town. While over 8 in 10 residents hold bachelor's or graduate degrees (very high for Milwaukee), about one-quarter of residents live in lower middle income households (with annual incomes of \$25,001 to \$50,000). However, just about the same number live in *upper* middle income households (with annual incomes of \$75,001 to \$150,000). The remaining residents live in low income, middle income, or high income households.



INTERESTING NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

- **Marcus Theater for the Performing Arts**, at 929 N. Water (see low cost events below).
- **Milwaukee Repertory Theater**, at 108 E. Wells.
- **Milwaukee Art Museum**, at 700 N. Art Museum Drive (see events below).
- **City Hall**, at 200 E. Wells, an architectural masterpiece designed by Henry H. Koch (see events and photos below).
- **Cathedral Square**, at 520 E. Wells (see events below).
- **Pfister Hotel**, at Jefferson and Wisconsin Avenue, a Romanesque Revival style building.
- **Juneau Park**, at 801 N. Lincoln Memorial Drive (see events and photos below).

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Announcing
Milwaukee's ethnic guide

A literal stroll through neighborhoods where Milwaukee's ethnic groups settled

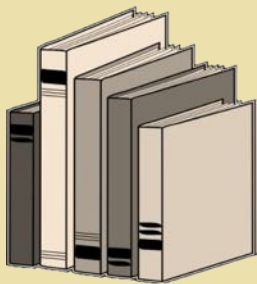
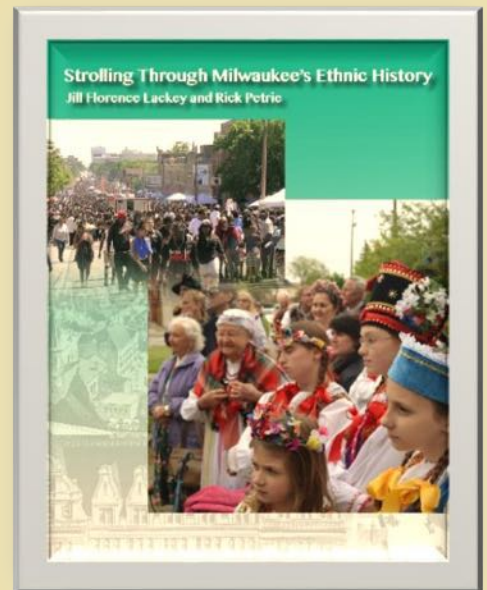
Dr. Jill Florence Lackey and Rick Petrie

Strolling through Milwaukee's Ethnic History

Chapters taking place in Lincoln Village, Walker's Point, Third Ward, Halyard Park, East Town, Lake Park, Jones Island, West Town, Riverwest

An "up close and personal" look at local ethnic life by directing readers to the neighborhoods and venues where the groups left their marks. *Strolling* brings readers directly into their experiences, whether it involves ambling through the environments they built or participating in contemporary ethnic activities.

Ethnic groups covered: Milwaukee Germans, Irish, African Americans, Italians, Mexicans, French, English, Norwegians, Jews, Hmong, North American Indians, Scots/Scots Irish, Czechs/Slovaks, Kashubes, Greeks, Puerto Ricans, and Burmese.



MECAH Publishing

Milwaukee Ethnic Collection of Arts and Humanities

<http://mecamilwaukee.com/NonFiction.html>

"*Strolling through Milwaukee's Ethnic History* is an intriguing guide to the ethnic history in our midst and a colorful reminder that Milwaukee has always been a city of newcomers."

- John Gurda

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.

COCOA WITH THE CLAUSES

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Dec., Sat. 11am-2pm	Cathedral Square Park, 520 E. Wells St.	Chance to take pictures of your kids with holiday characters, listen to Christmas music, and share your wish list with Santa.	Free

MILWAUKEE HOLIDAY LIGHTS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Nov.-late Dec., weekdays, 5-10pm	Cathedral Square, Pere Marquette Park, and Zeidler Union Square	Six-week festival to spread holiday spirit with animated light displays in the parks and hundreds of events.	Free

CATHEDRAL SQUARE MARKET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun. thru early Oct. Sat. 9am-1pm	520 E. Wells St.	Fresh produce from Wisconsin farms, baked goods, crafts, art, live music, yoga and activities.	Free

BASTILLE DAYS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jul., Thu. thru Sun	Cathedral Square Park 520 E. Wells St.	French festival with live music, international marketplace, French and Cajun cuisine.	Free

JAZZ IN THE PARK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Jun., Thu.'s 5-9pm	Cathedral Square Park, Kilbourn Ave. & N. Jefferson St.	An outdoor music tradition in Milwaukee featuring an eclectic lineup of jazz, big band, funk, R & B, reggae, blues and more.	Free

POETRY IN THE PARK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Aug., select Tue.'s, 6:30-8pm (check website)	Juneau Park, Prospect Ave. & Kil- bourn Ave., near Juneau statue	Poetry readings by known poets.	Free

PADDLE BOAT RENTALS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Summer months through Oct., daily 10am-7pm, weather permitting	Juneau Park, 801 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr.	Paddle boating with views of Milwaukee skyline and Lake Michigan.	unk

SWAN BOAT RENTALS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Summer months through Oct., daily 10am-7pm, weather permitting	Juneau Park, 801 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr.	Boating with views of Milwaukee skyline and Lake Michigan.	unk

DOORS OPEN MILWAUKEE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Sep., Sat. thru Sun.	Sites all over greater Milwaukee	Event opens the doors to over 100 buildings that hold hidden treasures and special stories, from churches to office buildings, theaters to work sites, museums to hotels, clubs, to universities; all sites of historic, architectural, cultural, or commercial interest.	Free

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY--CITY HALL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Nov., Thu., 5pm	City Hall, 200 E. Wells	Tree lighting with Milwaukee mayor, and choir and theater performances.	Free

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jan., Sun. 1pm	Uihlein Hall 929 N. Water St.	Festivities and performances on the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King.	Free

CANTOS DE LAS AMERICAS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Apr., Fri., 6:30pm	Marcus Center for the Arts, Uihlein Hall, 929 N Water St.	Concert by MPS students performing songs and dances from the Caribbean, Africa, indigenous America, Latin America and Europe (in addition to the Hmong, Laotian cultures).	Free

KIDS FROM WISCONSIN

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul., Sun. pm	Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water St.	Full musical revue for all ages, consisting of 20 singer/dancers and a 13 piece show band performing musical productions to over 100,000 people each summer.	Free

US AIR FORCE BAND OF MID-AMERICA CONCERT

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Summer, see website	Marcus Center for the Arts, Uihlein Hall, 929 N Water St.	Concert tour of largest ensemble in the Air National Guard Band that includes stops in Milwaukee.	Free

MORNING GLORY FINE CRAFT FAIR

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Aug., Sat. & Sun.	Fiserv Forum	Fair featuring over 100 fine craft artists exhibiting ceramics, glass, leather, wood, photography, jewelry, fiber, enamel, handmade paper, metal, and mixed media.	Free

OKTOBERFEST AT PERE MARQUETTE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Sep. to early Oct., Fri., Sat. opens noon, Sun. opens 10am	Pere Marquette Park and Marcus Center grounds	Opportunity to enjoy German food, beer, and music along Riverwalk.	Free

HOLIDAY PAJAMA JAMBOREE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Nov., Wed., 7pm	Bradley Pavilion of the Marcus Center, 929 N. Water St.	One-hour classical pops concert geared toward children and their families, with pajamas, teddy bears, and blankets are welcome for the youngest audience members.	Free, but nonperishable food donations encouraged

MILWAUKEE MUSLIM FILM FESTIVAL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Mar. thru late Apr.	Milwaukee Art Museum, 700 N. Art Museum Drive; Oriental Theater, 2230 N. Farwell Ave.; Student Union (2nd Fl.), 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd.	Films that explore topics that are timely, relevant, and generate meaningful discussion about Muslims and the Muslim world.	\$8, student discounts where applicable

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
1 st Thu. of each month	700 N. Art Museum Dr.	An architectural landmark with world-class exhibits.	Free (on date designated)

LAKEFRONT FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jun., Fri. 10am-10pm, Sat., 10am-7pm, Sun. 10am-5pm	Milwaukee Art Museum, 700 N. Art Museum Dr.	Exhibits of over 170 different artists with food and entertainment.	unk

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>

QUOTE FROM RESIDENT

If you are a resident of the East Town/Juneau Town neighborhood and would like to make an interesting observation about the area, please send your quote to JFLanthropologist@SBCglobal.net

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Corner of Cass & Wells looking west

Today's neighborhood-Riverwalk



Today's neighborhood-City Hall



Today's neighborhood-Statue of Leif Erikson in Juneau Park.



Today's neighborhood-Condos at Cass & Kilbourn

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