

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Morgan Ave; **S**-W. Forest Home Ave;
E-W. Forest Home Ave, **W**-S. 68th St

SOUTHWEST SIDE *Green Moor*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Green Moor is a neighborhood of moderate population density with a variety of home architectural styles. Ranch style houses from the 1950s to 1970s dominate, but there are also Cape Cods and a few early 20th century bungalows and Tudor-style homes.

The neighborhood's topography is partially flat with a number of gently rolling hills—perhaps giving the area a moor-like appearance that its name suggests. Green Moor shares its southern boundary with the City of Greenfield. The streets follow a grid pattern except for West Forest Home at the neighborhood's northern boundary that runs at a diagonal between South 56th and South 68th Streets. Forest Home Avenue is also the site of Green Moor's major business corridor.

The main green space is Armour Park, a 14-acre-commons with a tot lot and play area. See neighborhood photos below.

HISTORY

The Green Moor neighborhood was once a part of the unincorporated Town of Greenfield which extended from today's 27th to 124th Streets and Greenfield to College Avenues.

Early populations

A hamlet named Root Creek was established in the mid-1800s with a post office near the junction of today's 68th Street and Forest Home Avenue—then the Janesville Plank Road. The post office would later be moved to South 76th Street and then again to the intersection of Howard and Forest Home Avenues, next to Honey Creek. In 1887 the population of the service area of the post office was estimated at 129—most of the residents being German with a few Irish farmers. While Germans dominated the hamlet, they hailed from different regions. Some German immigrants had come from Austria, while others were from the German areas of Pomerania, Mecklenburg, Saxony, and Brandenburg. The Root Creek hamlet extended west from the current Root Creek and Green Moor neighborhoods to other Milwaukee areas and south into today's City of Greenfield. The post office discontinued in 1908, but an active group of Root Creek farmers and gardeners organized the Root Creek Fair in 1914--an event that remained in operation through 1939.

During the 1920s, the entire Southwest Side began to transition from a farming district to clusters of settlements that would become Milwaukee neighborhoods. Most of the migrating populations were Polish and German. Many settled first in the Jackson Park neighborhood, but some turned west and ventured further into the countryside, creating a minor housing boom. By 1937, the small area that is today's Green Moor had just over 60 residences and 15 businesses. Most of the settlement activity was along Forest Home Avenue. However, the advent of the Great Depression, followed by World War II, temporarily reduced the rate of development.



A good example of residents drawn to the area during this period appears below in the resident feature.

Green Moor random residents (1920s-1930s)

Names selected randomly from the City Directory in the Green Moor area (photos and additional information are from public records at Ancestry.com)

The Heidens

Sometime in the 1920s, the Heidens moved from a farm near Hawley Road to the Green Moore area. They purchased a home near 60th and Howard. The patriarch of the family was Peter Heiden, an immigrant from Saxony, Germany. He was in his eighties at the time of the move. He lived with his two unmarried adult children, Frank and Anna. Son Frank was working as a farmhand, as he had done his entire adult life, while Anna kept house. The family may have felt quite at home at their new location, as nearly all their neighbors were German.

While farming was usually a full-time job in the early 20th century, Peter also worked as a pump maker in the early years while building up his farm. Peter may have used savings from his farm and other labor to purchase his retirement home on Howard. He gave the value of the home as \$6,400 in the 1930 census (approximately \$89,000 today), and listed himself as the head of the household.

Peter had been married to Katharina/Catherine (nee Harmeyer), also a German immigrant. She died sometime between 1910 and 1920. In addition to Frank and Anna, the couple had children Frederick, Theresa, Joseph, Catherine, Mary, and perhaps more.

Peter died in 1932 and Frank assumed the role of head of household. The family shared a burial plot at Old Blessed Sacrament Cemetery (see photo).



Post World War II

A major housing boom *after* the war pressed many families of returning servicemen and others further west. By 1947, the Green Moor area had just under 100 residences. About the same time, the City of Milwaukee was engaged in a massive annexation program in the area. Between 1948 and 1953, a series of annexations added territory between Lincoln Avenue and Cold Spring Road and South 40th Street and South 100th Street. The area became eligible to receive city services such as road building and road improvement, which in turn attracted more residents.

Forest Home Avenue

The old Janesville Plank Road had been a carrot for the Root Creek *hamlet* and was the area first settled in the westward migration of Milwaukeeans to the two current neighborhoods of Green Moor and Root Creek. Forest Home is the street that separates the two. It would also develop into both neighborhoods' main commercial corridor. By the mid-1930s Forest Home had 13 businesses (nearly half taverns) within the Green Moor/Root Creek boundaries. This increased to 23 by the immediate postwar years. See list and notes below.

<i>Addresses on W. Forest Home Ave. in 1947</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
5614	John A. Seymour Tavern
5624	John A. Seymour Filling Station
5822	Mrs. Selma Gutwald Grocery
5900	Henry W. Stuhr Blacksmith Schellhaus & Ristau Auto Body Shop
5912	Archie E. Robrahm Tavern
6000	Francis C. McLaughlin Tavern
6012	William W. Bartsch Mason Contractor
6015	Mrs. Blanch Gorzalski Tavern
6126	Severn J. Sommers Nursery
6229	Edward R. Ludwig Tavern
6237	Anton Weiss Grocery
6307	Martin W. Butt Filling Station
6338	Jannis Andacht Nurse
6420	Root Creek Oriole Club
6510	Paul A. Scholz Painter
6551	Walter Gorski Tavern
6633	William Wendt Plaster Contractor
6710	Ralph F. Knierim Tavern
6720	Neil Horigan Grocery

Addresses on W. Forest Home Ave. in 1947	Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory
6802	St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
6830	Joseph R. Kovach Tavern

Summary and notes from census and other records:

- The tradition of taverns along this stretch of Forest Home continued after the war. The taverns generally catered to specific ethnic groups that had either deep roots in the area or were newer arrivals. For example, Blanch Gorzalski (nee Gomanski) and Walter Gorski were Polish; Francis McLaughlin was likely Irish; Archie Robrahm was a Pomeranian; and Edward R. Ludwig, Ralph Knierim, and Joseph R. Kovach were Germans. No conclusive information was found on John Seymour.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants.
- Henry Stuhr, the blacksmith, had been at his shop prior to 1920. He must have adapted his work from serving animal transportation to serving automobile transportation. An immigrant from Mecklenburg, Germany, he died in 1950 and was buried at the St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church cemetery up the street from his shop. He had no doubt been a resident of the old Root Creek hamlet. The owner of the auto body shop occupying the same address as Stuhr may have been a Robert Schellhaus, also a German immigrant.
- The Sommers family, with the nursery, also had deep roots in the hamlet. Severn's father Herman farmed at this address in 1920. By 1930 he listed his occupation as a "landscape gardener." He was a Pomeranian immigrant from Germany.
- Anton Weiss, the grocer, was also an immigrant. He was born in Austria. He'd listed himself as a "cattle dealer" at that address in 1940.
- Martin Butt, with the gas station, may also have had roots in the Root Creek hamlet. He'd operated his filling station at that location since the 1920s. His father, William Butt, an immigrant from Brandenburg, Germany, had a farm on the old Janesville Plank Road in the early 20th century.
- The nurse, Jannis Andacht, was also the child of a German immigrant. She had completed high school.
- St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church was a mainstay in the Root Creek hamlet. Named *Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Johannes-Gemeinde* zu Root Creek, Wisconsin, it was built in 1846.

Arrival of Latinos

Latinos (mainly Mexicans) began to settle on the *near* South Side in the 1920s and slowly migrated south into the Polish areas. Since the 1970s, the Mexican community has grown all over the South Side and Southwest Side, including Green Moor.

A number of push-pull factors influenced the population changes. During the early 1900s Mexican immigration to the United States expanded because of worsening economic conditions in Mexico. A large wave of Mexicans also left the country during the political and economic turmoil created by the Mexican Revolution of 1910. In addition, both Mexicans

and Puerto Ricans were often recruited by local industries to fill workplace needs. Beginning in 1917, the US government implemented a series of immigration restriction policies to curb the influx of Mexicans, mainly in response to local claims that Mexicans (who often worked for low wages) were taking jobs away from ‘true’ Americans.

But they found a place to fit in. Latinos—particularly Mexicans--were able to settle successfully alongside Poles in particular because they shared so many traits in common. These included the Catholic faith, the focus on the Madonna figure, polka music traditions, similarities in childrearing and eldercare practices, and an entrepreneurial spirit.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, the small Green Moor neighborhood has just over 500 residents. Of these, over 8 in 10 are European American (the overwhelming majority claiming German or Polish ancestry). Nearly 1 in 7 are Latinos--most claiming Mexican descent. The remaining population is comprised of a scattering of Asians (mainly Hmong/Lao) and people of multiple backgrounds. The neighborhood skews slightly younger than Milwaukee in general, with nearly 3 in 10 residents aged 19 and under. There are also significantly more women than men.

Green Moor is a lower middle class to middle income neighborhood with a median household income of just under \$50,000 annually. The occupations cited most often by residents are in the fields of administration, sales, and management.

Nearly three-quarters of Green Moor property units are owner-occupied. Costs for home ownership (e.g., mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to buy, taxes, insurance) are slightly higher by Milwaukee standards, with nearly all of the homes costing between \$1,001 and \$2,000 a month. Rents are modest with nearly 9 in 10 units going for \$501 to \$1000 a month.

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.

DAN JANSEN FAMILY FEST--GREENFIELD			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late May, Fri. 5-11pm, Sat. 12-11pm, Sun. 12-4pm	Konkel Park, 5151 W. Layton Ave., Greenfield	Festival of rides, car show, live entertainment, and more.	Free

ST. MARY PARISH FESTIVAL—HALES CORNERS			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jul., Fri., Sat., Sun., see website for hours	9520 W. Forest Home Ave., Hales Corners	Festival to bring parishioners together in a spirit of community, including food, games, concessions, live music, raffle and more.	Free

JACKSON PARK FARMERS MARKET

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

CROATIANFEST-FRANKLIN

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jul., Sat. 11am-11pm; Sun. 11am-6pm	Croatian Park, 9100 S. 76th St., Franklin	Festival with Croatian food, live music, kids' activities, games, and more.	unk

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT--GREENFIELD

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
First week Aug., weekday 5:30- 8:30pm	Konkel Park, 5151 W. Layton Ave., Greenfield	Fun evening of free food, games, rides, chance to dialogue with local police and community organizations.	Free

Most of 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

“I’ve lived here for about eight years. It’s pretty quiet. It’s convenient for shopping and to the bus.”

--Anonymous

If you have an interesting comment about this neighborhood, please email it to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Blessed Sacrament Cemetery

Today's neighborhood-Houses on 58th & Norwich



Today's neighborhood-Armour Park



Today's neighborhood-57th & Howard



Today's neighborhood-58th & Howard

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:
JFLanthropologist@currently.com