

**Approximate boundaries:**

**N-W.** Becher St; **S-W.** Cleveland Ave;

**E-W.** Forest Home Ave (partial) S. 27<sup>th</sup> St, **W-S.** 35<sup>th</sup> St

# SOUTHWEST SIDE *Layton Park*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Bordering Forest Home Cemetery, Layton Park is a densely populated neighborhood with blocks of modest wood frame one- and two-story houses. The streets follow a rectangular grid with the exception of West Forest Home Avenue, a wide boulevard that runs at a diagonal across the neighborhood. Layton Park's topography is generally flat with gently rolling hills. There are no public parks and the only area of green space is Pilgrims' Rest Cemetery and the expansive Forest Home Cemetery just across the neighborhood's eastern border.

There are two commercial corridors in Layton Park. One runs along Lincoln Avenue and the second along West Forest Home. See neighborhood photos below.

## HISTORY

Layton Park is named after Frederick Layton. Layton, a wealthy 19th century businessman in the meat-packing industry, gave away most of his wealth to the Milwaukee community, including the city's first art museum.

### Early populations

The earliest known humans in the Layton Park area were Late Woodland people on the grounds of today's Forest Home Cemetery. Here 50 circular mounds and four to five effigy mounds were located. These were surveyed by Increase Lapham in the 1850s.

At the time of first European contact on Milwaukee's Old South Side, there was also an Indian village in the cemetery area. At the intersection of Muskego and Forest Home—on the boundary of Layton Park and Forest Home Hills—a village of about 150 Natives thrived and planted cornfields nearby. The Forest Home Cemetery was established in 1850.



Today's neighborhood-  
St. Rafael the Archangel Church

Thirty years after Forest Home Cemetery opened, Pilgrims' Rest was established by St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, which was located in the Walker's Point neighborhood. Originally founded as a mission church called the *Die Evangelische-Lutherisch St. Stephanus-Gemeinde* in 1853, it was organized for German parishioners located south of the Menomonee River.

About the same time that Pilgrims' Rest was built, Poles began to settle in large numbers in the area just east of today's Layton Park. The settlement areas became known as Polonias, or

Polish-American communities. Polonias tended to be self-sustaining neighborhoods with intricate parish systems and a wealth of Polish institutions. The strongest concentration of Poles settled in an area called the Old (or Historic) South Side. As the areas filled up, the Polish community began to spread south and west—many finding their way into today's Layton Park neighborhood, where they joined German families who were migrating south from the center of the city.

In the early 20th century, a number of other immigrant and migrant families found their way into the neighborhood, including those from Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Yugoslavia, and a small community of Russians. The Russians established the St. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church on S. 30th in 1927. Below is a profile of one member of this Russian community.

### **Layton Park family profile (early 20th century)**

*(Information from U.S. Census and other public records)*

#### **The blended Cehanovich family**

Sometime before 1940, Alexander Paul Cehanovich purchased a home at 3310 W. Grant in today's Layton Park neighborhood, just blocks from the St. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church. Alex was born in 1890 in Minsk, Russia.

Alex married late. Little was found about his time of arrival in the United States or what he did when he first arrived, but he was in the country by 1928. That was the year he took a trip to Havana, Cuba.

Between 1930 and 1932, Alex married a widowed or divorced woman named Martha Berezecki. Martha, born Martha Heisel, also had Russian roots. Her mother, Mina Keshemberg, was born in Russia.

Martha had been married to a Polish immigrant named John Berezecki prior to her marriage to Alex. The Berezeckis had lived on Garden Street (now South 5th Place) and on Maple Street during their marriage, and had daughters Mathilda and Alma. Social Security claim records suggest that John may have died while the girls were young.

The daughters were pre-teens when Martha married Alex. After the marriage, Alex and Martha Cehanovich had at least three more children, Mary, Sophie, and Paul.

While the Cehanovich family owned their home on Grant, they likely struggled during the Great Depression. They had at least five under-aged children to support. Alex's education amounted to one year in high school (not uncommon for the times) and he worked as a laborer for a private firm. In 1940 he told the census taker that he had worked only 38 weeks during the previous year and had earned approximately \$1,000. Like many families during these times, the Cehanoviches may have gotten help from their parish.

#### *Lincoln Avenue*

Lincoln was always the main commercial corridor for Layton Park. Even during the years of the Great Depression, the street teemed with businesses. See the list from 1935 and notes below.

<i>Addresses on W. Lincoln in the Layton Park area-1935</i>	<i>Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2504	Willard Coupal Filling Station
2519-2525	Muskego Auto Sales
2617a	Mrs. Alva M. Haderer Interior Design
2632	Leon A. Weiss Barber

<i>Addresses on W. Lincoln in the Layton Park area-1935</i>	<i>Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2636	Leo A. Brodzeller Dentist Julius V. Heil Physician
2637	George R. Glueck Meats
2638	Bednarski's Rexall Drug Store
2641	Layton Food Shop
2701	Frank Doligulski Tavern
2705	National Tea Company
2814	Matthew C. Dallinger Real Estate
2817	Emil E. Abramowski House Mover
2818	Joseph Kupner Grocery
2831	Roman & Edward Ice & Coal Company (Rodzicsak)
2832	Otto Isaacson Shoe Repair
2900	Roman Pankowski Tavern
2906	Klein & Leeser Plumbers (August Leeser)
2911	Philip Schlamp Tailor
2925	William Janssen Funeral Service
2934	Leo's Food Market
3000	Michael Helm Bowling Alley & Tavern
3006	Milbert C. Zimmerman Barber
3014	Frank Zagar Tailor
3018	John F. Erensky Dry Goods
3026	Stanley J. Lawetzki Tavern
3027	Anton J. Muth Real Estate Herbert C. Krause Lawyer Layton Park Building & Loan
3030	Cecile Beauty Shop
3031	Rex Pharmacy
3032	Lincoln Avenue Food Market

<i>Addresses on W. Lincoln in the Layton Park area-1935</i>	<i>Businesses, organizations, offices from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
3105	Charles C. Burris Barber
3200	John P. Gurda Hardware
3203	William C. Felkner Filling Station
3219	Diamond Cleaners
3223	Carl Block Barber
3225	Louise Jungbluth Dry Goods
3227	Apartments
3229	George J. Schaefer Baker
3231	Gustav T. Faustmann Meats
3232	Tebo & Johnson Funeral Directors
3233	A & P Grocery
3235	Frank P. Zusy Drugs
3300	George M. Bundschuh Tavern
3301	Highway Food Market
3306	Salvation Army Gospel Hall
3310	Arthur S. Janik Tavern
3315	Emil J. Sponholz Grocery
3321	Anton Graczyk Tavern
3328	Ann's Sweet Shop

#### **Notes from U.S. census and other records:**

- Layton Park residents had most of their basic needs met on Lincoln with two supermarkets, six smaller grocers, two butchers, one bakery, one confectioner, three drug stores, three barbers, a hardware store, two funeral parlors, two dry good stores, a cleaner, a plumber, a filling station, and two healthcare providers.
- Despite Great Depression times, this stretch of Lincoln offered a plethora of leisure time activities, with a bowling alley and a whopping seven taverns.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants. Most also lived at or near their shops.
- Willard Coupal, with the gas station, was born in Michigan, the son of a Canadian immigrant (probably French Canadian). Typical of Milwaukee shopkeepers, he'd completed the 8th grade.

- Alva M. Haderer, the interior designer, was an anomaly on the street in that she was not an immigrant nor the child of one, and she'd completed two years of high school. Alva was also an anomaly because she was a woman. While female shopkeepers had a clear presence on Milwaukee's North Side, this was rarely the case on the South Side (save for dressmakers, widows taking over the husband's shop, and beauty shop owners).
- George R. Glueck, the butcher, was the son of a German immigrant.
- Frank Doligulski, with the tavern, was an immigrant from Poland. He had completed the 8th grade.
- Matthew C. Dallinger, the real estate agent, was the son of German immigrants and he had also completed the 8th grade.
- Emil E. Abramowski, the mover, was an immigrant from Poland.
- Otto Isaacson, the shoe repairman, was the son of immigrants from Finland. He'd been born in South Dakota. He'd only completed the 6th grade.
- Roman Pankowski, with the tavern, was the son of Polish immigrants.
- Philip Schlamp, the tailor, was born in Germany.
- William Janssen, the funeral director, was not an immigrant and may not have been the son of immigrants. He had completed the 7th grade.
- Milbert C. Zimmerman, the barber, was the son of a German immigrant who had a year of high school.
- Frank Zagar, the tailor, was born in Yugoslavia.
- John F. Erensky, with the dry goods store, was born in Russia. He was a rag peddler before he opened his store. He may have been Jewish.
- Stanley J. Lawetzki, with the tavern, was the son of immigrants from Poland.
- Anton J. Muth, the real estate agent, was born in Germany.
- Charles C. Burris, the barber, was from Iowa. Neither he nor his parents were immigrants.
- John P. Gurda, with the hardware store, was an immigrant from Poland. He is likely ancestral to noted Milwaukee historian, John Gurda.
- William C. Felkner, with the filling station, was the son of a German immigrant.
- Carl Block, the barber, was born in Germany.
- Louise Jungbluth, with the dry goods store, was widowed before 1920. She was the daughter of German immigrants.
- Gustav T. Faustmann, the butcher, was born in Germany. He'd completed the 4th grade.
- Frank P. Zusy, with the drugstore, was the son of German immigrants.
- George M. Bundschuh, with the tavern, was from Pennsylvania. His mother was an immigrant from France and his father from Germany.
- Arthur S. Janik, with the tavern, was the grandson of a Polish immigrant.
- Emil J. Sponholz, the grocer, was the son of German immigrants.
- Anton Graczyk, with the tavern, was born in Poland. He had completed the 6th grade.

For a century, the Europeans dominated Layton Park. This all began changing in the 1970s.

### *Arrival of Latinos*

Latinos (mainly Mexicans) began to settle on the *near* South Side in the 1920s and slowly migrated south into the area developed by Polish immigrants. Since the 1970s, the Mexican community has grown dramatically, and other Latinos have arrived from the Caribbean and Central and South America. In the Polonia neighborhood, they have been joined more recently by a smattering of African Americans, Asians, and American Indians.

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. 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.

Although most Mexicans found jobs in local tanneries and foundries, some came to Milwaukee as strikebreakers—often unknowingly. They were hired by companies that were intent on breaking their own labor unions, and the Mexicans earned the enmity of the European workers they replaced. This situation led to early discrimination against Mexican Americans in Milwaukee.

But they found a place to fit in. Latinos were able to settle successfully alongside the Poles 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 there are over 8,000 residents in Layton Park. Of these, approximately two-thirds are Latinos (mostly those of Mexican ancestry). Just over one-quarter are European Americans (mostly Germans, Poles, and people of multiple European backgrounds) and about 1 in 20 are African Americans. There is also a scattering of Asians (mostly Hmong/Lao), Arabs, and people of mixed racial backgrounds. While St. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church draws parishioners of Ethiopian, Eritrean, East Indian, Greek, Romanian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Ukrainian backgrounds, few of these live in the neighborhood.

The median household income for Layton Park is just over \$38,000, placing the neighborhood in the lower middle-income strata. The jobs claimed most often by adult residents are in the fields of production, administration, food service, and sales. There are nearly three times as many residents who make their income by farming in Layton Park as the proportion in other Milwaukee areas, although the number of farmers is just over 100.

The median price of a detached house in Layton Park is just over \$137,500 compared to just over \$210,500 for Milwaukee overall. The median price for one unit in a multi-unit house is nearly \$249,500 compared to over \$176,500 for Milwaukee overall. The median rent in Layton Park is exactly the same as in Milwaukee generally, at \$666 monthly.

### **INTERESTING NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES**

- **Pilgrims’ Rest Cemetery**, at 3110 W. Forest Home, established in August, 1880, by St. Stephen's (Lutheran) congregation and today merged with Good Hope Cemetery under the name Good Hope/Pilgrims’ Rest Cemetery Corp.
- **St. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church**, at 2025 S. 30th St., established as a Russian parish at its present site in 1927.

- **Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church**, at 2827 W. Harrison, founded in 1948, with a current gardening program for youth.
- **St. Rafael the Archangel Church**, at 2059 S. 33rd, a Catholic parish with services in English and Spanish.

## 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 FOREST HOME CEMETERY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily 8am-4:30pm	2405 W. Forest Home	Tour the beautiful Chapel Gardens, Landmark Chapel, and the Hall of History that tells the story of Milwaukee dignitaries, including European founders of Milwaukee, several mayors, major African American activists, and brewery tycoons	Free

### FREE FISHING

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Summer months	Pond at Kosciuszko Park, 7th-8th along Lincoln Ave.	Fishing experience in well-stocked pond with bait shop 1 block away. (414) 645-4624	Free

### OPEN SWIM—PULASKI

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily, 1-5pm, holiday times vary	Pulaski Park, 2701 S. 16th St.	Open swim year-round at indoor pool with diving boards, locker rooms, vending machines.	unk

### SLEDDING--PULASKI

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Winter months, daytime, lighted evenings 4:30-8:30pm	Pulaski Park, 2701 S. 16th St.	Sledding day or night on lighted hill.	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

*If you have an interesting comment about this neighborhood, please email it to [JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)*

## PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on 25th & W. Becher St.

Today's neighborhood-S. 29th & W. Forest Home Ave. (1)



Today's neighborhood-S. 29th & W. Forest Home Ave. (2)





Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on 31st & W. Arthur Ave.



Today's neighborhood-Pilgrims Rest Cemetery

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](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)