

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Hampton Ave; S-W. Capitol Dr;

E-N. Sherman Blvd; W-Hwy 145

NORTHWEST SIDE *Lincoln Creek*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

The Lincoln Creek neighborhood has high population density with homes spaced closely together. There are a large number of Cape Cod and colonial styled houses and a few Tudors. The neighborhood is also home to the 42-acre Parklawn Housing Development (see photo below). A very large commercial corridor runs along the entire length of West Fond Du Lac Avenue at the boundary of Lincoln Creek neighborhood.

The main topographical feature in the area is Lincoln Creek at the northern border of the neighborhood of the same name. There is ample green space on either side of the waterway. Most of the streets follow a rectangular grid. However, some streets run at a diagonal shadowing West Fond Du Lac Avenue that defines the western border of the neighborhood. See neighborhood photos below.

HISTORY

The Lincoln Creek *neighborhood* was named after the creek of the same name.

Early populations

The area that today is the Lincoln Creek neighborhood was once the northern tip of the unincorporated, rural Town of Wauwatosa. According to an 1855 map, the boundaries of the Town of Wauwatosa were Greenfield to the south, Hampton to the north, 27th Street to the east, and 127th Street to the west. Most of the Town of Wauwatosa settlers were migrants from its eastern neighbor, Milwaukee, and most of these were Germans. The City of Milwaukee would later annex much of the Town of Wauwatosa.

The Lincoln Creek area had originally shared its northern border with Granville Township. Granville—that also later consolidated with Milwaukee--had attracted several waves of German immigrants between the mid-1800s and early 1900s. These included a wave of Pennsylvania “Dutch” (actually Germans) who arrived from Telford, Pennsylvania in the 1840s, and German Russians who had left Germany for Russia’s Volga River and Black Sea areas in the late 1700s. Many of the latter later immigrated to America and Wisconsin between 1910 and 1920. Parts of this German population would spill over to the Lincoln Creek area in later generations.

Two subdivisions, Franklin Gardens and Longview, were in development during the 1920s in the Lincoln Creek region, which was still in the Town of Wauwatosa. By the early 1940s, Milwaukee had annexed all of the Lincoln Creek area and several nearby neighborhoods. While most residents were Germans, there were also Irish, English, Jews, Poles, Czechs, and French families within these borders.

Below is the profile of one of the neighborhood residents, selected randomly from the 1942 Milwaukee City Directory.



Today's neighborhood-
Houses on N. 54th St.

Lincoln Creek Family

(Information from Milwaukee City Directory, *U.S. Census*, and other public records)

The Bootzins

Sometime in 1941 or early 1942, the struggling Bootzlin family moved to 4621 W. Congress in the Lincoln Creek neighborhood. The family included Arnold, b. 1914, wife Evelyn Cecelia (nee Myslis), b. 1917, and toddler Richard. They had moved from a rented flat at 4217 North 44th Place, also in Lincoln Creek.

It was Great Depression times and the family was financially stressed. Arnold had only worked 44 weeks in 1939 as a glove cutter and had brought in a mere \$900 for the year. Despite giving birth to her son in 1940, Evelyn took a job as a maid in a private home the same year.

Both Arnold and Evelyn were Jewish. Arnold was the youngest child among six children to Russian immigrant parents Herman and Helen Bootzin. He was raised on North 10th Street in the old 10th Ward—an area later known as the western section of Bronzeville. His parents had emigrated from Russia in 1910 and his father worked in a bookbinding shop. The family spoke Yiddish at home. Sometime in the 1920s the family moved northwest to the Sherman Park area where Arnold attended and graduated from Washington High School (see his band photo in the Washington High School yearbook in 1930—Arnold in the center).

Evelyn was also the child of immigrants. Her father Ben Myslis was born in Jerusalem and her mother Sarah (nee Latts) was born in Russia. The couple had immigrated to the United States in 1890. Living in a rented flat on Ogden Avenue, father Ben worked as a cutter in a leather goods shop. This may have been the same shop where Arnold later took a job as a glove cutter.

While the Bootzins were undeniably struggling during the Great Depression, records suggest that they did better later in life. It is not known how long they remained in Lincoln Creek, but Arnold and Evelyn later retired in Florida. Having settled in Dade County, Arnold died in 1991 and Evelyn died a decade later.



The importance of Fond du Lac Avenue

Fond du Lac Avenue, on the Lincoln Creek neighborhood's western border, was an early plank road built in the 1850s. Leading to the city of Fond du Lac, the name meant "bottom of the Lake" in French—a reference to that city's location at the southern end of Lake Winnebago. West Fond du Lac Avenue became the major business corridor in the Lincoln Creek neighborhood.

The following chart lists the businesses that were on that stretch of Fond du Lac in 1942. See summary and notes below.

<i>Addresses on W. Fond du Lac Ave. in 1942</i>	<i>Names of businesses, offices, apartments, and organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
5118	Sheridan Service Station
5121	Lee H. Marriott Groceries
5123	Otto Heine Groceries
5208	Charles Fricke & Sons Welders
5209	Paul A. Heipp Groceries
5241	Otto Roschi Well Driller
5380	Joseph Aumueller Florist
5418	John Lindner Plumber
5526	Jacob Neumueller Tavern
5650	Ernst Matties Filling Station
5831	R. Mack & Sons Building Contractors (Rudolph)

Summary notes from the U.S. Census and other records:

- Technically, only those addresses on the east side of Fond du Lac (even numbers) were within the Lincoln Creek neighborhood. However, residents would be accessing shops on either side of the street, as their needs dictated.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, most shopkeepers had not attended high school. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants. In addition, nearly all proprietors lived at or very near the address of their shops.
- W. Fond du Lac businesses served the resident needs in Lincoln Creek reasonably well, with three grocers and two filling stations.
- The presence of a well digger, building contractor, and plumber reflects a neighborhood with recent development.
- Lee H. Marriott, the grocer, was the son of an Irish immigrant. He lived on the same block as his business and had run a gas station before opening the grocery store. He had attended one year of high school.
- Otto Heine, the grocer, was a German immigrant who'd worked as a hotel clerk before opening his store.

- Charles Fricke, the welder, was the son of German immigrants. He had completed the 3rd grade.
- Otto Roschi, the well digger, was an immigrant from Germany who made his home in Granville Township in 1940. He'd completed the 5th grade.
- Joseph Aumueller, the florist, lived next door to his shop. Another immigrant from Germany, Joseph had completed the 8th grade.
- John Lindner, the plumber, was also a German immigrant. He'd completed the 7th grade.
- Jacob Neumueller, with the tavern, was the son of German immigrants.
- Ernst Matties, with the filling station, was an immigrant from Germany. He'd completed the 8th grade.
- R. Mack & Sons Building Contractors was owned by Rudolph Mack. He was born in West Prussia, Germany. By the 1940s his son, Rudolph Mack Jr. appeared to have been running the business. The Milwaukee neighborhood of Mack Acres was named after this contractor.

Post World War II

Lincoln Creek survived both the Great Depression and World War II. The neighborhood was fully settled during the 1950s. In the decades that followed, people of color began to migrate to Milwaukee's Northwest Side. African Americans arrived for two reasons: (1) available industrial jobs on the Northwest Side and the area that had been Granville, and (2) the need for housing following the leveling of their former central city home known as Bronzeville (see [Halyard Park neighborhood](#) for details). As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods where Germans dominated, the integration was relatively peaceful. Many African Americans were able to obtain family-supporting jobs and purchase homes.

However, just as soon as the black population had settled in large numbers, they were faced with the long deindustrialization movement, beginning in the 1980s. Manufacturing employment in Milwaukee fell 77 percent from its peak in 1963, to the present. What had been a working-and middle-class area on the Northwest Side was in decline.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, there are over 7,100 residents living in the high-density, Lincoln Creek neighborhood. The median household income is just under \$44,000 annually, placing the neighborhood in the lower middle-income stratum. The largest number of jobs claimed by adult residents are in the fields of administration, healthcare support, and production. There are more than twice the number of residents in healthcare support and healthcare tech than their proportions in other Milwaukee neighborhoods.

Over the decades, most of the German population left Lincoln Creek. Just over 200 people today claim German ancestry in the area. Nearly 9 in 10 residents are African Americans and approximately 1 in 15 are European Americans (mostly people of mixed European backgrounds). The rest are Latin American (mostly Mexican), indigenous African, Jamaican, West Indian, Asian (Hmong/Lao), and American Indian. The average age of residents is 46.

Home ownership is strong in the neighborhood. Nearly two-thirds of the property units in Lincoln Creek are owned, which is particularly high for Milwaukee.

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.

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4th, 9am-12:30pm	Sherman Park, 3000 N. Sherman Blvd.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, games.	Free

FREE FAMILY SWIM—WASHINGTON HS			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Tue.'s 6:00-6:55pm females; 7:00-7:55pm males	Washington H.S., 2525 N. Sherman Blvd., enter main gym door on Sherman Blvd.	Indoor swimming with swim caps available for purchase (children 7 and under must be accompanied by adult). 875-6025.	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 are a resident in Lincoln Creek and wish to make an interesting observation about this neighborhood, please send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Businesses on W. Fond Du Lac Ave. (1)



Today's neighborhood-
Hickman Academy
(a Parental Choice school)



Today's neighborhood-
Parklawn Housing at N. 44th St.
& W. Hope Ave.



Today's neighborhood-
Businesses on W. Fond Du Lac Ave (2).



Today's neighborhood-
Faith Temple



Today's neighborhood-
Lincoln Creek near N. 48th St. &
W. Congress St. looking west (1)



Today's neighborhood-
Lincoln Creek near N. 48th St. &
W. Congress St. looking west (2)



Today's neighborhood-Houses on W. Ely Place & W. Leon Terrace

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