

Approximate boundaries:
N-W. Becher St; **S**-W. Harrison Ave;
E-I-94 Freeway; **W**-S. 16th St

SOUTH SIDE *Lincoln Village*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Lincoln Village is a residential neighborhood with modest homes and strong commercial corridors along West Lincoln Avenue, South 6th Street, and South 16th Street. It is rare to see a commercial building unoccupied and vacant lots simply do not exist in the business district. The corridors almost exclusively house “mom and pop” shops.

The stores are small by comparison to other neighborhoods, and tend to have long-term occupants. There are nearly 20 ethnic restaurants or delis along these blocks, representing Mexican, Salvadoran, Serbian, and Polish food.

Two architectural styles are of note in Lincoln Village. One style is commercial with parapets, where walls extend above the roof of the buildings (see photos below). These can be angular or curved, and represent an architectural style that was brought from northern Poland to the neighborhood. The style was popular in Belgium and the Netherlands, then brought to Germany, and the Germans erected buildings with parapets in northern Poland.

The other architecture style of note is residential, and is called the “Polish flat.” This developed at the grassroots. Most Poles who arrived in Milwaukee were intent on home and land ownership. Often their first paychecks went toward purchasing narrow lots where they would build three to four room cottages. However, as families grew and more relatives arrived, the homeowners lacked space on the lots to enlarge the homes. Often they raised the cottages and replaced the wood foundations with brick or cement block. This would create a semi-basement dwelling with a separate entrance for another family. The end products were called “Polish flats.”

HISTORY

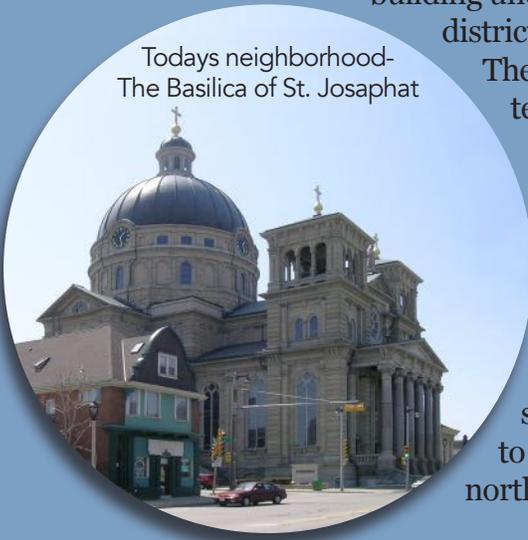
As John McGivern once said in *Around the Corner with John McGivern*, this neighborhood has everything! The Lincoln Village episode of the series could only highlight a *few* of the neighborhood’s many assets.

Lincoln Village, as it is now called, has a long history. It began to develop with the arrival of a large wave of Polish immigrants in the late 19th century.

Early populations

Polish immigration to America resulted from a combination of ‘push-pull’ factors. Between 1795 and 1918, Poland was partitioned by Austria, Russia and Prussia. In the 1870s Prussian leader Bismarck initiated a Germanization policy in the western section of Poland designed to bar speaking of languages other than German, impose a draft for the German army, weaken the Catholic Church, and replace Polish landowners with German citizens. This policy, coupled with the sharp drop in grain prices in the 1880s, led to massive emigrations of people from Poland in the late 19th century.

Today's neighborhood-
The Basilica of St. Josaphat



Many economically-devastated Poles came to urban areas in America's Midwest where they could access entry-level jobs in industry. 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. One of these Polonias developed on Milwaukee's South Side, a part of which is now known as Lincoln Village.

Often called "cozy" by early residents, Lincoln Village became a place where people lived nurtured lives, surrounded by extended families and neighbors they knew well. The Polish language was spoken by most, well into the 1930s. Some of the early residents went on to achieve greatness in their respective fields. See examples below.

Old South Side resident (early 20th century)

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

Marianna Michalska (Gilda Grayⁱ)

Born in Krakow, Poland to parents Max and Wanda Michalska in 1901, Marianna immigrated to the United States in 1907 with her family. The Michalskas quickly found a home on Third Avenue (today's South 8th Street) in Milwaukee's old 14th Ward. (The exact street address is not known and would have been either in today's Lincoln Village or Polonia neighborhood.) At a young age, Marianna married her neighbor, John Gorecki, son of Socialist and union leader, Martin Gorecki. Although John worked as a pattern maker while in the neighborhood, he was also becoming an accomplished musician and became a concert violinist. The couple had one child, Martin. When Marianna and John moved to New York to pursue John's career, young Martin stayed behind with her parents.

Although Marianna and John eventually divorced, Marianna may have been influenced by her performer husband. She became a dancer and is said to have introduced the shimmy to American audiences in 1919.

While her marriage was breaking up, Marianna moved to Chicago, where she was discovered by talent agent Frank Westphal, the husband of Sophie Tucker. It was Tucker who convinced Marianna to change her name—which eventually became Gilda Gray. She succeeded as a vaudeville performer and married a second time to Gil Boag.

The couple moved to Hollywood where Gilda Gray's vaudeville act gained additional recognition. By the mid-1920s she made several movies—all of which included her famous shimmy.

After the stock market crash of 1929, Gilda lost most of her assets, and returned to New York. There she worked as a dancer at the Palace Theater. During World War II she raised money for Poland and brought six Polish citizens to America during the Cold War era. Recognizing her great contributions, Ralph Edwards dedicated a *This is Your Life* show to Gilda in 1953.

Son Marin Gorecki, who had remained in Milwaukee on South 8th Street during his childhood, was greatly influenced by his musical parents. He went on to become a big band maestro as an adult, under the name of Martin Gray.



Another neighborhood resident who went on to achieve greatness is Robert J. Modrzejewski. In addition to earning the Medal of Honor, a local park now bears his name.

Old South Side resident (1940s)

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

Robert J. Modrzejewskiⁱⁱⁱ

In the 1940s, Robert J. Modrzejewski grew up in the Lincoln Village neighborhood, at 2431 South 9th Street, possibly just around the corner from Gilda Gray's childhood home. Like most children on his block, if weather permitted, he walked the few blocks to Cleveland Park between 10th and 11th Streets in today's Polonia neighborhood to play softball or baseball—both sports being extremely popular on the Old South Side.

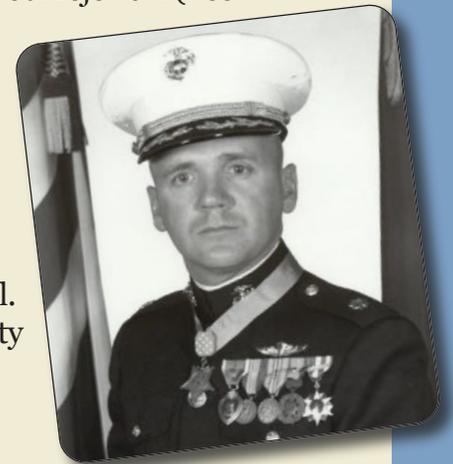
Robert was the fifth child of parents Joseph J. and Rose S. Modrzejewski (nee Tarkowski), both immigrants from Poland. Among Roberts' siblings were sisters Dolores, Esther, and Adeline, and brother Arthur. As a child, Robert's maternal grandfather, Ignatz Tarkowski, and uncle Frank Tarkowski lived in his household. The father Joseph worked as a machinist for the U.S., Chicago and North Western Railroad. Like virtually all families in this Polish neighborhood, Robert's was Roman Catholic.

In 1953, Robert graduated from Casimir Pulaski High School. He later attended Wisconsin State Teachers College and the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Education.

While at UW-M, Robert became a member of the Platoon Leaders Class that led to his being commissioned as a Marine Corps Reserve second lieutenant upon graduation in 1957. By 1960 he had been integrated into the Regular Marine Corps.

Robert was ordered to the West Coast and then to the Republic of Vietnam. In Vietnam, he assumed duty as Commanding Officer of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division. During these years Robert J. Modrzejewski distinguished himself above and beyond the call of duty—for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor. He and another Marine, John J. McGinty III, were presented the Medals of Honor on March 12, 1968 by President Lyndon Johnson.

Modrzejewski retired from the military in 1986. In an official ceremony in July 2004, the City of Milwaukee renamed Robert's old haunt, Cleveland Park, to Modrzejewski Playground. Today with fewer than 20 percent of the Lincoln Village residents still being Polish, many have trouble with the pronunciation and affectionately refer to the playground as "Mod Park."



Old South Side institutions

Some of the strongest assets in the mainly Polish neighborhood were the self-help institutions—the fraternal, relief organizations for the homeland, and arts and cultural organizations.

In Lincoln Village, faith communities were built on a grand scale. One of the Poles' outstanding achievements was the Basilica of St. Josaphat, which they built with their own hands. The majestic building is one of the most beautiful churches in the world, and continually attracts tourists from all over the globe (see photo below).

Baseball on the Old South Side

Early on the area that is today's Lincoln Village and Baran Park neighborhoods, became entrenched with baseball fanaticism. This began early and spread quickly.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, baseball had become so popular in the United States that some Polish leaders worried it was Americanizing youth too quickly. In fact, leaders in Chicago's Polonia organized its own baseball league in 1913 to keep young people from assimilating into the Anglo-American world through the sport.

Soon Milwaukee followed suit. Within a few years the Kosciuszko Reds had established themselves as the sandlot darlings of the Old South Side. The Polish semi-professional team operated between 1909 and 1919, a time of great upheaval due to World War I. The Reds, often called the "Koskys," began competition in the City League and then shifted to the Lake Shore League. They won four championships during the decade, and were so legendary that they became the topic of several publications, including Neal Pease's "The Kosciuszko Reds 1909-1919: Kings of the Milwaukee Sandlots" in *Polish American Studies*, and George Reimann's *Sandlot Baseball in Milwaukee's South Side*. Photos still exist that depict thousands of resident fans flooding South 5th Place after a Kosciuszko Reds' victory.

Baseball's legacy in Lincoln Village

Perhaps not surprisingly, baseball had an enduring presence in the area. On the same street that fans flooded during a Kosky victory, a young man grew up to become a major league star (see resident profile on the following page).

And just two blocks east of his home, a new park was being built that would ensure the presence of baseball for generations to come. Baran Park was named after Father Theodore Baran, the priest who led the effort that paid off the parish debt in 1929 for the construction of the Basilica of St. Josaphat. The park opened in 1950. With ample baseball fields and bleachers, the park soon became a major Milwaukee host to little league play.

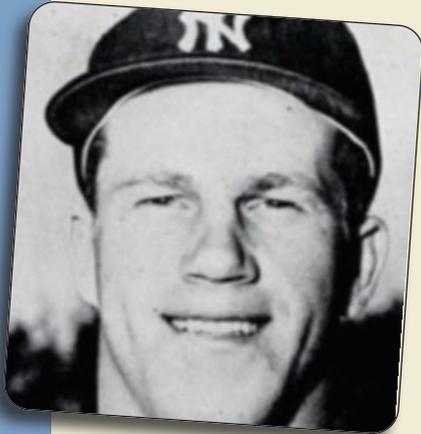
Old South Side resident (1940s)

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

Tony Kubekⁱⁱⁱ

Anthony Christopher Kubek Jr. was born in 1936 and grew up in a rented house at the corner of 5th Place and Harrison Avenue, in today's Lincoln Village neighborhood, one block west of Baran Park. He was the grandson of Polish immigrants and the son of Anthony Kubek Sr., a laborer, and Jennie Kubek (nee Oleniczak), a homemaker. Both Tony Sr. and Jennie had also grown up within blocks of their later 5th Place address.

Like most other Polish kids in the area, Tony Jr. grew up playing baseball, probably at Kosciuszko Park in his early years, and no doubt at Baran Park when this was completed in Tony's teens. Like his neighborhood peers, Tony became an avid fan of the Milwaukee Braves when they arrived in town in the early 1950s.



Tony was a particularly talented shortstop. He caught the attention of the New York Yankee organization and was signed to a major league contract. He was brought up to the majors in 1957-- curiously, the same year the Milwaukee Braves won the pennant and went on to compete in the World Series, against none other than the New York Yankees. And how did Tony Kubek do against his beloved hometown team? He had one of the best World Series games a rookie ever had, going 3 for 5 with 2 home runs, 3 runs scored, and 4 RBI. Fortunately for Milwaukee, the Braves did win the Series in 7 games.

Kubek took Rookie of the Year honors that year, and went on to play for the Yankees through the 1965 season. He became an All-Star four times.

When Kubek's playing days were over, he advanced to a career in broadcasting. Between 1968 and 1989, he broadcast 12 World Series and 14 League Championships for NBC television. He is a recipient of the Ford C. Frick Award of the Baseball Broadcasters' Hall of Fame.

Arrival of Latinos

For a century, the Poles dominated Lincoln Village. This all changed in the 1970s.

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. They have been joined more recently by significant numbers of Southeast Asians—especially Hmong, Burmese and Vietnamese refugees—and African Americans, Arabs, and North 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. And judging by their presence in the Felix Mantilla (Little) League at Baran Park, they also share an avid interest in baseball.

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Announcing
Milwaukee's ethnic guide

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

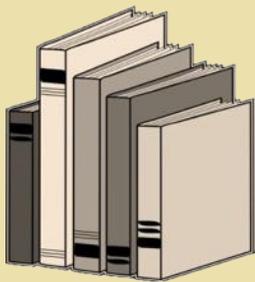
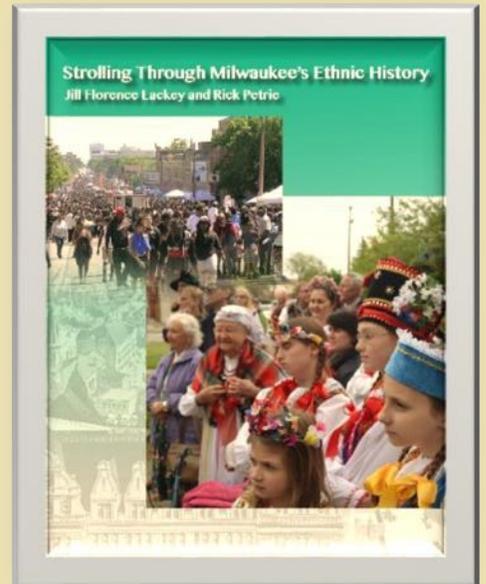
Dr. Jill Florence Lackey and Rick Petrie

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://mecahmilwaukee.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

Comparison of businesses on Lincoln

To illustrate the gradual movement from Polish to Latino, the following tables show the businesses on Lincoln Avenue between 14th and 16th Streets in 1940 and then again in 2010.

1940

Businesses/organizations operated by Poles (with at least one partner being Polish)

Business owner unknown

Business owned by people other than Poles

<i>Address on W. Lincoln Ave.</i>	<i>Businesses/organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
1400	Theodor T. Marlewski Drugs Cyril R. Marlewski Physician Henry C. Lassa Dentist
1407	Jerome Czaskos Curtains Edmund Shade Shop
1412	Marian Szyukalski & Son Hardware Thaddeus Hien Radio Repair
1413	Frank Gapinski Real Estate Cybulski, Swiderski & Ceuzena Lawyers Stanley J. Cybulski Lawyers Joseph B. Swiderski Lawyer Edward J. Couzens Lawyer Victor Krawlecki Lawyer
1425	Edwin Kulinski Sporting Goods
1428-30	Walter Krezman Tavern United Sign Display Co.
1433	John Stever Barber
1434	Ernest Leong Laundry
1435	Ann Sarnecki Confectioner
1437	Tessie I. Komorowski Delicatessan
1438	Edward Gorzalski Tavern
1439	Behrend Music Shop
1500	Socony Vacuum Oil Filling Station
1509	Lincoln House Bakery
1515	Irene's Beauty Shop
1518	Modern Tailoring Co.

<i>Address on W. Lincoln Ave.</i>	<i>Businesses/organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
1519	Lincoln Outlet Store Shoes
1520	Empire Construction Company Inc.
1522	Stanley Nowak Tavern
1524	Miecislaust Mackowski Drugs
1527	Lincoln Florist
1531	Jesse Popper Restaurant
1534	Pearl Hosiery Inc.
1550	Ignatz Maclolcek Church Goods
1551	Stephen Kaczmarck Tavern
1553	Art Rite Printing Co.
1554	Leon Drezdon Tobacco
1555	Anthony Stoltman Landscaping and Gardening
1556	John Trinastic Tavern
1561	Geraldine's Beauty Shop
1565	Harry Lishtig Liquor
1567	Leonard Mrotek Shoe Repair
1569	Edward Hanoski Confectioner
1570	Walter Nimmer Filling Station
1571	Max Wnentkowski Shoes
1575	Lincoln Tobacco Company

Notes on above from census and other records:

- Ernest Leong, who owned the laundry, was Chinese.
- Jesse Popper with the restaurant, was Czech.
- Leon Drezdon was Polish and named one of his cigars after a local mystery character (also from Poland) named Tata Rebe.
- Anthony Stoltman appears to have been of German extraction.
- Walter Nimmer with the filling station was a Pomeranian from Germany.

An example of a long-time business family from the Poles of Lincoln Village appears below.

Lincoln Village Polish Business Family

The Rozgas

The Rozgas were cornerstone citizens of the Old South Side. Stephen Rozga emigrated from the German partition of Poland in 1881. He and wife Anna opened a furniture store on Lincoln Avenue across the street from the Basilica. When their best-selling item proved to be caskets, they picked up the cue and opened the Rozga Funeral Home at 7th and Lincoln in 1898. Since then, the business has served generations of Milwaukeeans.

The Rozga couple's son John, also a leader among the early Poles, participated in the family business with wife Kate and their children (pictured right about 1927). By the mid-1920s John opened a second funeral home several miles west on Lincoln Avenue that did not survive the Great Depression. He rejoined his father's business in the mid-1930s.

Tom Rozga was the next proprietor of the Rozga Funeral Home. He operated the original Rozga Funeral Home on the Old South Side into the twenty-first century, living above the business with his family. His son, also named John, took over the business in 2005. *(Photo courtesy of John Rozga.)*



2010

Businesses/organizations operated by Latinos (with at least one partner being Latino)

Business owner unknown

Business owned by people other than Latinos

Address on W. Lincoln Ave.	Businesses/organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u>
1407	Housing Resources Inc.
1412	Fashion Impression Beauty Salon
1428	Morelia's Market Grocer
1501	Blessed Hope Assembly of God Church
1509	Delgado I. Faust Image Hair Studio
1515	J's Towing LLC

Address on W. Lincoln Ave.	Businesses/organizations from the <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u>
1519	Bel Resource Inc. Employment
1520	Flyda Travel Agency Krystal's Mexican Restaurant La Guadalupana Restaurant
1531	Taqueria Aranda Restaurant
1534	Lincoln Supermarket
1550	Centra de Sonido Auto Radio and Stereo
1556	Milwaukee Beauty Salon
1561	Nail Art Gallery Supply
1556	GB Consultants Real Estate (Theresa Rivera)
1567	J & J Tax Service
1570	Tom's Auto Maintenance
1575	Tony Communications Cellular
1601	Lopez Bakery

Notes on above:

- The Nail Art shop was owned by Asians
- Food establishments dominated the street in 2010

An example of a business family from the Mexicans of Lincoln Village appears below.

Lincoln Village Mexican Business Family

(Information from census records, Wikipedia photo)

The Orozcos

In 1991, Ramon Orozco, and brothers Luis and Alphonso, opened Tres Hermanos restaurant at 1332 West Lincoln Avenue. (See the brothers to the right with former Wisconsin Governor, Tommy Thompson).

The restaurant soon became a neighborhood hub in Lincoln Village, attracting formal and informal diners from all ethnic backgrounds. Current single owner, Ramon Orozco, hosts karaoke every Thursday through Sunday and offers live entertainment on a weekly basis.



Between 2007 and 2010, the restaurant expanded. Ramon Orozco purchased land next to his restaurant and added a large patio on a raised deck surrounded by elaborate planters and ornate banisters. Months later this was followed by public art next to the patio designed by Celine Farrell. The art depicts the cultural mix of the neighborhood. *(Photo courtesy of Ramon Orozco.)*

Current populations (as of 2021)

Lincoln Village is the most densely populated neighborhood in Milwaukee with nearly 13,000 residents in an area less than a square mile in size. Some of this population has been recently lost due to the widening of the Kinnickinnic River that razed over 100 homes. Mexican Americans are today the largest cultural group in the neighborhood that had once been Milwaukee’s Polish stronghold. Other ethnic communities have also found a home in Lincoln Village. A survey conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc. in 2009 found that the neighborhood hosted descendants from 110 national groups, and the largest are those from Mexico, Poland, and American Indian nations.

Lincoln Village today is a young neighborhood, with nearly 4 in 10 residents aged 19 and younger. Nearly half of the residents live in households that fall into the low income category, with annual incomes under \$25,000.

Approximately two-thirds of the property units in Lincoln Village are rented, and this is partly due to the preponderance of duplexes in the neighborhood (that may be occupied by the owners with additional units rented to others). Rents are a bargain in the neighborhood, with nearly 8 in 10 of the units renting for \$500 to \$1,000.

Faith communities dominate Lincoln Village. Per square mile, the neighborhood has over 10 times more religious organizations than the average for Wisconsin and the United States as a whole.

INTERESTING FEATURES

- **The Basilica of St. Josaphat** on 6th St. and Lincoln Ave., a historic landmark (see photo).
- **South Stadium** on Becher St. between 7th St. and 9th St., a newly restored MPS “Friday Night Lights” institution.
- **Kosciuszko Park** with its newly created Kosciuszko Square on Lincoln Ave. between 7th St. and 10th St. (see photo).
- **Ethnic restaurants and delis** all over the neighborhood, representing Mexico, El Salvador, Serbia, and Poland (see photo).

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.

UNGUIDED TOUR OF BASILICA OF ST. JOSAPHAT			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mon., 9am-4pm	Visitor's Center, Basilica of St. Josaphat, 2333 S. 6th St.	Opportunity to see and learn about one of the most beautiful churches in America with informational exhibits on lower level.	Free

GUIDED TOUR OF BASILICA OF ST. JOSAPHAT

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Make reservations on Basilica's website	Visitor's Center, Basilica of St. Josaphat, 2333 S. 6th St.	Opportunity to see and learn about one of the most beautiful churches in America with informational exhibits on lower level.	Free

BASILICA PARISH PICNIC

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jun., Sun. 1-5pm	Basilica of St. Josaphat, S. 6th St. & W. Lincoln Ave.	Food, raffles, games, exhibits, look at Basilica.	Free

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Dec., Sat. 9:30am-12pm	Kosciuszko Community Center, 2201 S. 7th St.	All-you-can-eat breakfast of pancakes, sausage, beverage, with Santa, and photos of Santa (first 250 receive gift bag).	unk

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

PELICAN GROVE SWIM

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July, 12:30-4:30 (check website for additional times)	Kosciuszko Park, 2201 S. 7th St.	Outdoor pool with giant- and kid-sized waterslides.	unk

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://mecamilwaukee.com/NonFiction.html>

QUOTES FROM RESIDENTS

Quotes from 2002 oral history conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.¹— Remembering then

“When we first came, we had these gravelly roads and neat houses—the same houses that were here now were here then, in the late twenties. The houses are still in the same shape as they were then, different paint and siding. Better windows, but the structure's the same. Roads have been improved since then. Kosciuszko Park is the same as it once was. Businesses on Lincoln

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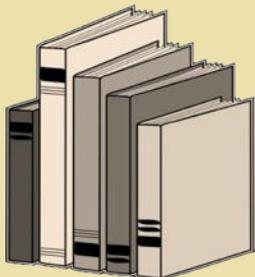
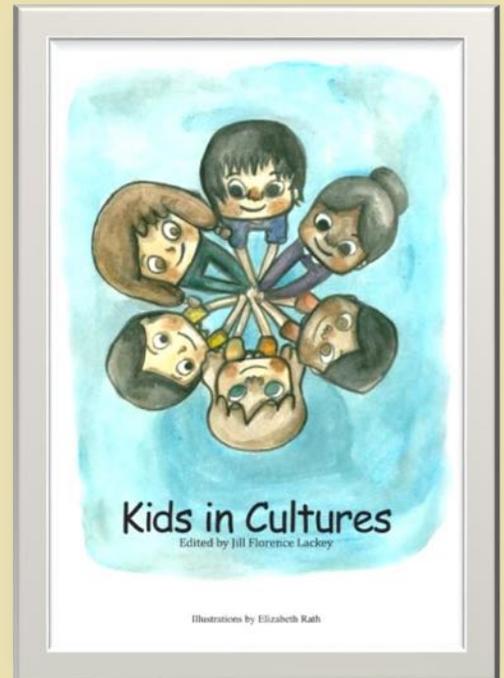
Introducing
Milwaukee children's book
Tales taking place in greater Milwaukee areas

Authors are scholars in their fields

Kids in Cultures

Stories taking place in Lincoln Village, Bronzeville, and other local spots

- In "Mammoth meat," archaeologist Dr. Alice Kehoe uses evidence from a prehistoric site on Lake Michigan to speculate on the early culture of Paleoindians that lived 13,500 years ago.
- In "Barbara Smith is German?" cultural anthropologist Dr. Jill Florence Lackey introduces kids to a family that denied its ethnic background in the past because of associated stereotypes.
- In "Showing up is important: A Hmong virtue," Dr. Chia Youyee Vang and Tujntuj Laujxeeb Yang take young people inside a small community that maintains ethnic bonds in distinctive ways.
- In "Firefly nights: An urban Oneida story," enrolled Oneida Indian, Kitty Hill, narrates an enchanting story about a family that maintains ties to a common homeland.
- In "Snow falls in Bronzeville: A story of a lost central city neighborhood," cultural anthropologist Dr. Sienna Jacks gives a mesmerizing account of a close-knit neighborhood where African Americans and Jews cooperated for the good of the residents.
- In "The Braves take the World Series: A Polish and Mexican story," cultural anthropologist, Dr. Jill Florence Lackey introduces kids to ethnic groups that found their common grounds.



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changed. Lincoln was really busy then—there were a lot of mom/pop businesses—grocery stores, meat markets, banks, savings and loans, drug stores (small). Picadilly Ice Cream Store was our hangout on 9th and Lincoln. There were three theaters on Lincoln—on 10th, 11th, and 14th.”

“The first shopping center was Southgate on 27th and Oklahoma. This started the deterioration of strip centers like Lincoln or Mitchell. Then people with cars would drive out to shopping centers. Then larger centers developed and people would go out there for more variety. Now it’s reverting back with downtown shopping, etc. Change took place in many ways. As neighborhood people became more affluent, had cars, they wanted to move out to the suburbs. Here you’d have three to four living units on one lot—upstairs and downstairs and a cottage in back. But later you could have one house on two lots.”

“Back then, the community beyond Polonia was rural—it was country past Oklahoma. You married people in your own neighborhood.”

“My father contracted to work as a welder from Mexico. He came in the forties [and] then came back and decided to stay.”

“There is a lot of competition for jobs here. The Latinos here are very hard workers; it has always been so. They work in factories, auto parts factories, produce places. Most that come here are poor and have nothing, and slowly they begin working to start and buy things and get on their feet. The Latinos, especially Mexicans, open up restaurants.”

“Poles always took their kids to the dances. We [Latinos] take our kids to the dances also. But with the white kids, they reach a certain age and would not want to be seen with their parents. With us, we still are okay being around our parents.”

“People moved out of the area in the eighties or so. The Polish people moving out and Hispanics were coming in. The expressway built in fifties and sixties took a lot of homes. They took the older homes. They [Poles] wanted to stay but there were no homes available.”

Quotes from 2002 oral history conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.¹— About now

“We’ve been here for 30 years and have seen the neighborhood transition from a mainly Polish neighborhood to a mainly Hispanic one, but I’ve loved it all the time. My kids went to St. Josaphat’s School. I’ve been active in neighborhood organizations.”

“Today you hear Hmong and Spanish languages. Mostly Hispanic in this area. You have some new Polish immigrants coming in, but most speak English. They’re coming for various reasons. Partly it was the opening of government with the Berlin Wall coming down and Solidarity. Some came in after the war when communists took over. Communists could not fully take over because of the religion and the Blessed Mother.”

“For me, it was a destination neighborhood.”

“A recent tragedy has been the removal of about 100 homes along the Kinnickinnic River so the MMSD could widen it. While they came and *told* us about the project, they never *asked* us what we wanted. I still remember seeing this older Polish woman with her much older Polish mother sobbing during one of their information sessions. They knew they were about to lose their home. The worst part is that the housing market is so bad and most people won’t get enough from the sale of their homes to pay off their mortgages.”

¹ Urban Anthropology Inc. complies with human subjects requirements of formal research and asks informants to sign informed consent forms that stipulate anonymity, hence names are not provided with the quotes.

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-
Latinos and American Indians celebrating
their roots in Lincoln Village

Today's neighborhood-The Basilica of St. Josaphat



Today's neighborhood-
Poles celebrating their
roots in Lincoln Village



Today's neighborhood-
Architecture featuring parapets brought over from
northern Poland



Today's neighborhood-
Newly developed
Kosciuszko Square in
Kosciuszko Park



Today's neighborhood-Milwaukee Poles celebrating
Constitution at Kosciuszko Park



Today's neighborhood-
El Salvador Restaurant, one of many
ethnic restaurants in neighborhood

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

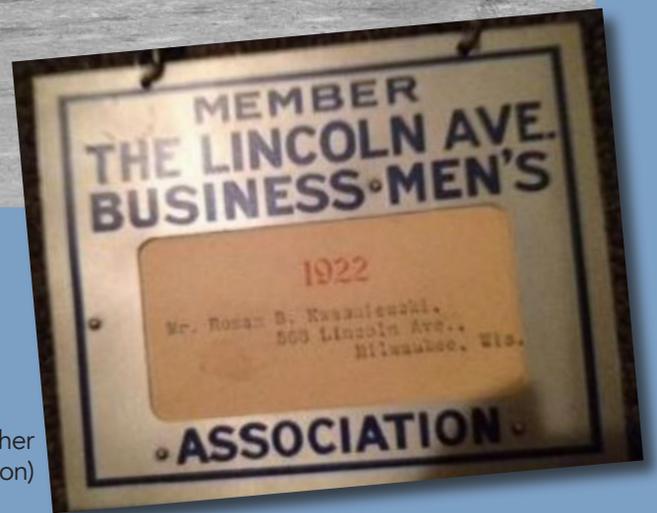
OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS



Val Figueroa posing with the "squirrel lady" statue that was stolen from Kosciuszko Park in the early 70s (photo courtesy of Nick Figueroa)



Rozga Funeral Home and Streeter's Billiards (ca. 1915).
(Courtesy of John Rozga)



Business association plaque belonging to famed photographer Roman Kwasniewski (photo courtesy of Barb Nelson)



Eighth grade class at Windlake Elementary School ca. 1937. Photo courtesy of Gregg Jozwik.

Students pictured: Chester Jozwik, Dale Lockwood, Gerald Gricot(?), Gilbert Pokora, Donald Gatkowski, Jack Glaser, Daniel Wozniak, Eugene Stys, Celia Ogradowski, Loretta Filut, Sophie Rzepkowski, Stella Korylowicz, Walter Zanjalin(?), Roger Schlass, Joseph Piekarski, Lorraine Pankowska, Lottie Olesky, Audrey Wobshall, Alvino Soczynski, Rose Page, Louise Kowalski, Virginia Jankiewicz, Elmer Pinske, Gilbert Latus, Casimir Bartnikowski, Ed Brokiewicz, Walter Wisniewski, Richard Hybicki, Ervin Gradecki, John Ignatowski, Leon Tischer, Harriet Kubal, Burton Stapenik, Ruth Nowacki, Henry Rolbiecki, Mary Reidenbach, Ruth Nicaud, Frances Bock

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