

**Approximate boundaries:**

**N-E.** North Ave; **S-E.** Ogden Ave; **E-N.** Prospect Ave;  
**W-N.** Humboldt Ave (partial) Milwaukee River

# LOWER EAST SIDE *Lower East Side*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

The Lower East Side is a narrow neighborhood situated between the Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan. Two major street systems co-exist on the Lower East Side—one running parallel to the lake bluff and the other following Milwaukee’s standard rectangular grid.

The neighborhood is an area of architectural extremes from rustic backyard cottages along Pulaski Street to upscale high rises overlooking the lake on Prospect Avenue. Overall, the Lower East Side has nearly five times more cafes and nearly three times more bars than the rest of Milwaukee.

## HISTORY

John Gurda, in *Milwaukee: City of Neighborhoods*, calls the Lower East Side a “neighborhood of contrasts.”

### Early populations

The contrasts were apparent since the Lower East Side’s beginnings--between 1860 and 1900. The original residents included wealthy grain traders, lawyers, merchants, and bankers from New England and New York. They built some of the grand Victorian mansions on Prospect Avenue. At the same time another population of Polish Kashubian immigrants were erecting small cottages and a few two story homes along the Milwaukee River. They often raised chickens in their backyards. They founded St. Hedwig’s Parish on Humboldt Avenue and Brady Street. *(To learn about one of these Poles who went on to greatness, see his profile on the following page.)*

Between the wealthy population near the lake and the immigrant Poles near the river was a mixed-class group of Germans, Yankees, and Irish. The Irish established the Holy Rosary Parish on Oakland Avenue (see photo below) that, like St. Hedwig’s for the Poles, became the anchor for the Irish community.

As these populations moved to other areas of Milwaukee, a group of Italians from Sicily began to settle in the Lower East Side. They set up delis and restaurants in the neighborhood and founded St. Rita’s Church, which would become their anchor. As the neighborhood gradually lost its strong ethnic enclaves, the three anchor churches (Hedwig’s, Holy Rosary, and St. Rita’s) would consolidate as one church—Three Holy Women.

By the 1920s general prosperity in Milwaukee generated new developments on the Lower East Side, including the majestic Oriental Theater and scores of high- and medium-rise apartment buildings.



Today's neighborhood-  
Cass Street Park

## Brady Street resident profile (1920-1940s)

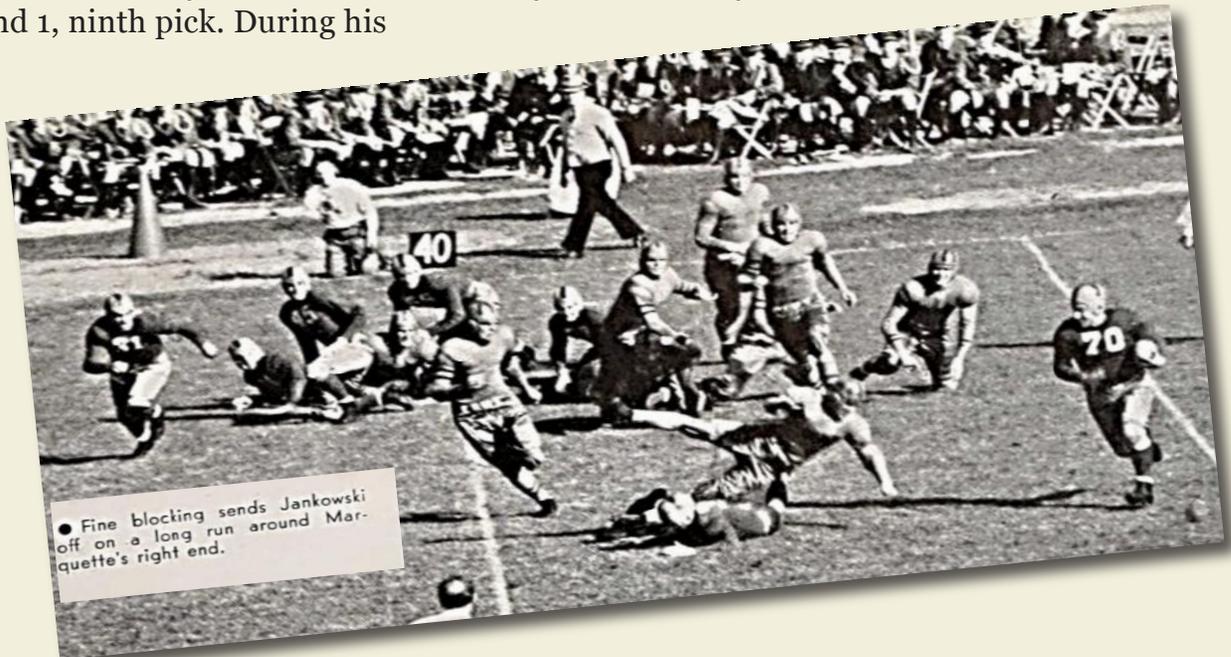
*(Information and photo from public records at Ancestry.com and other public records)*

### Packer Hall of Famer, Eddie Jankowski

Born in 1913, Eddie Jankowski grew up on Pulaski Street, near Brady. His parents, August and Anna Jankowski, were the children of immigrants from Poland (probably Kashubian). His father worked as a court clerk for the City of Milwaukee. The family no doubt worshipped at St. Hedwig's and may very well have raised chickens in their backyard. Eddie had six siblings.

Eddie had a talent for sports. He was active in athletics at East Division High School (now Riverside) where he served on the Athletic Council. He later played college football at the University of Wisconsin, where he was a member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity. At Wisconsin, he was referred to as "the most valuable" player on both offense and defense. *See action shot of him below carrying the ball from the Badger yearbook of 1937.*

That same year, Eddie was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in the first round 1, ninth pick. During his



four years with the NFL Packers (1937-1941), Eddie starred at positions of fullback and halfback. In those days, players' pay was very low, even by Great Depression standards. Depending on the team, players might be paid by the game, and always kept a "day job." In the 1940 census, while at the height of his career, 26-year-old Eddie Jankowski was still living with his parents (now in Whitefish Bay), and reported working 52 weeks of the year as a salesman, earning an annual income of \$1,300 (about average for the times). Records suggest he may have been employed by the Miller Brewing Company.

During World War II, Eddie served as an officer in the US Navy. He eventually married Arlene M. Tiedeman and had at least one child. He became a coach for Whitefish Bay High School.

In 1982, Eddie Jankowski was inducted into the Green Bay Packer Hall of Fame. He died at age 83 in 1996 and was buried at Resurrection Cemetery in Madison.

## Farwell Avenue

Farwell quickly became the major business corridor on the Lower East Side. Even at the height of the Great Depression the street teemed with commercial activity. See list for 1935 and notes below.

Addresses on N. Farwell in 1935	Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory
1806	Otto G. Hahmman Meats
1808	Ogden Cleaners & Dyers
1810	Apartments
1811	Kathryn Schubert Curtain Cleaners
1812	Helen B. Korff Bakery
1814	Brentwood Beauty Salon
1816	Edgewater Garage
1827	Gregory Hat Shop
1829	Apartments
1853	Hoffmann & Kassner Caterers
1863	Albert Hacker Dentist
1901	Philip J. Weiss Funeral Director
1913	Hobby Antique Shop
1941	Gerold Markets Inc. Meats
1943	Mary M. Brandt Groceries
1946	National Tea Company
1947	Willis Rexall Inc. Drugs
2000	Shorecrest Delicatessen
2004	Joseph Famularo Barber
2006	Apartments
2010	Louis B. Scheiber Shoe Repair
2012-14	Calhoun Insurance Agency Standard Building & Loan Association Civic Mutual Building & Loan Association
2100	Farwell Sales Company Garage Keystone Automotive Service Company
2121	William S. Cooper China Repair
2123	Chieftain Model Supply Company Toys

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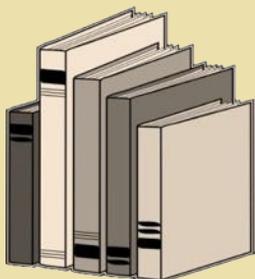
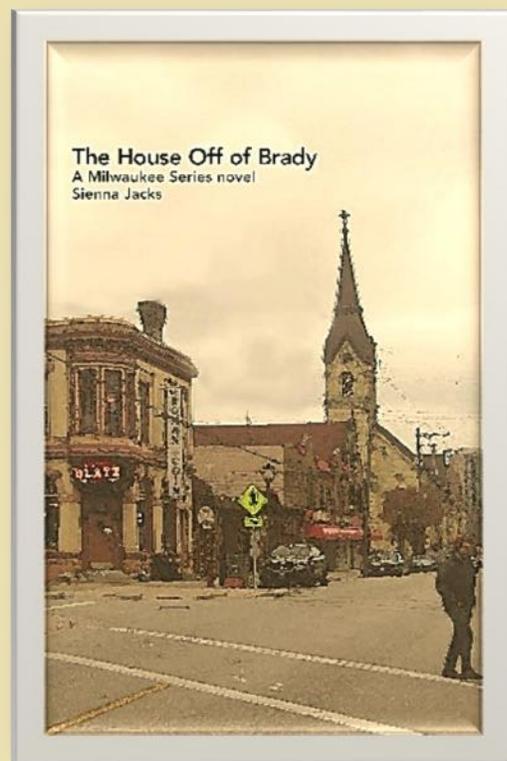
Novels that educate readers on Milwaukee neighborhoods

This series, written by mystery novelist Sienna Jacks takes place in historic neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

*The House Off of Brady*

Illuminating the histories of the Third Ward and Brady Street

Two young anthropologists, trying to convince a local nonprofit to sponsor a neighborhood house museum, must show that the historical occupants of the house were representative of Milwaukee's Brady Street, and that they project positive images for the neighborhood. Their efforts are boosted by a personal journal left behind by one of the home's occupants—Giuseppe Russo. But as the young anthropologists translate and transcribe the journal, they learn that Giuseppe had been banished from his former community in the Third Ward. Are they about to stumble on information that could kill the project—or something perhaps even worse?



**MECAH Publishing**

*Milwaukee Ethnic Collection of Arts and Humanities*

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

*All of the author's royalties go to supporting neighborhood museums and exhibits in Milwaukee, when book is purchased through the publisher*

<i>Addresses on N. Farwell in 1935</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2159-61	Founders Paint Company Inc.
2163	National Radiator Corporation Oil Heating Sales Company
2169	George Kashou Rugs Circle Cleaners Chemical Control Inc.
2175	Hermina Cee Carpet Weavers
2183	Merc Industrial Laboratories
2201	Hugh H. Julien Groceries
2203	Louis W. Musch Meats
2205	Julien Apartments
2207	Rosemary's Beauty Shop
2211	Vincent Puccio Signs
2213	Wisconsin Upholstery Company
2214	Martin W. Ebert Tailor Charles T. Merz Shoe Repair
2215	Harry Tabachnick Physician Herbert J. Schmidt Chiropodist
2216	Oriental Barber Shop
2217	Riverview Barber Shop
2218	Oriental Grill
2219	M-K Lunch
2220-22	Oriental Theater Building
2221	Paul Apostotakos Shoe Repair
2223	Little Repair Locksmith Shop
2224	Marie E. Brahm Milliner
2226	Martin Davidson's Delicatessen
2227	White Tower System Inc. Restaurant
2228	Oriental Theater
2229	The Annex Tavern
2232	East Side Floral Company
2234-38	Oriental Theater Pharmacy
2235	Frank Rieder Restaruant

## Notes from census and other public records:

- The number of women-run businesses on Farwell in 1935 was very high. Among the shops where proprietors' names were listed, nearly 40 percent were women.
- As in all neighborhoods prior to 1970, few of the shopkeepers had attended high school. Most were also immigrants or children of immigrants.
- The businesses that remain in operation today include Weiss Funeral Home, and the Oriental Theater.
- As in 1935, Farwell Avenue remains a place with a large proportion of small restaurants/delis and barbers.
- Otto Hahmman, the butcher, rented a flat on Royal Place while running his shop. He was the son of German immigrants.
- Kathryn Schubert, the drapery cleaner, lived on Marshall while operating her shop.
- Helen Korff, with the bakery, was the daughter of Bohemian immigrants. She lived in a flat behind or above the bakery.
- Hoffmann & Kassner Caterers appeared to have been managed by Anna Hoffmann, who lived on Farwell.
- The Weiss family, with the funeral home, lived at the same address as their business. Philip was the son of a German immigrant.
- Joseph Famularo, the barber, lived on Mount Vernon. He was the son of Italian immigrants.
- George Kashou and his wife Souklasian were Palestinian immigrants. They lived on Murray.
- Hermina Cee, the carpet weaver, was an Austrian immigrant. She lived at the same address as her shop.
- Hugh Julien also lived at the same address as his grocery store. He apparently also owned the apartment building down the street.
- Louis Musch, the butcher, lived on 45th St. He was the son of German immigrants.
- Vincent Puccio, with the sign company, was an Italian immigrant. He rented an apartment on Grand Avenue.
- Paul Apostolopoulos, the shoe shiner, was born in Kiparisia, Greece.

The lingering Great Depression and World War II brought development to a standstill. When the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee opened its door in the 1950s, many of the apartments became homes to students.

By the late 1960s, Brady Street had become the center of the countercultural movement in Milwaukee, with head shops and book stores replacing many of the ethnic establishments. (See Brady Street neighborhood.)

## Current populations (as of 2021)

By the late 1970s most countercultural influences on Brady Street had moved west of the Milwaukee River. In the 1980s new developments began on and around Brady Street that attracted a new population of well-educated young professionals.

Today about one-third of the residents on the Lower East Side are aged 25-34, over 80 percent are European American, and nearly half have bachelor's degrees, a significantly higher proportion of degrees than in the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Metro. However, the educational level does not correlate with income in this neighborhood. Over half of the residents on

the Lower East Side live in low income households (annual incomes of less than \$25,000) or lower middle income households (\$25,001 to \$50,000). Nearly 8 of 10 properties in the neighborhood are rented, rather than owned.

## INTERESTING NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

- **Oriental Theater** at 2230 N. Farwell Ave., one of the finest examples of the movie palaces in the nation (see photo).
- **Charles Allis Art Museum** at 1801 N. Prospect Ave. (see photo).
- **McKinley Marina** at 1750 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr.
- **Wisconsin Conservatory of Music** at 1574 N. Prospect Ave. (see photo).
- **Jewish Museum Milwaukee** at 1360 N. Prospect Ave.

## 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.

JEWISH MUSEUM OF MILWAUKEE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mon.-Thu 10am-4pm; Fri. 10am-2pm, Sun. 12-4pm	1360 N. Prospect Ave.	Dedicated to preserving and presenting the history of the Jewish people in southeastern Wisconsin and celebrating the continuum of Jewish heritage and culture.	unk

FESTIVUS ON BRADY			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Dec., Sat. 9:30pm-1:30am.	Brady St.	Opportunity to air grievances and participate in feats of strength to win Festivus pole, per Festivus Seinfeld episode in 1997.	Free

BRADY STREET PET PARADE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
October	Brady St.	Brady Street Pet Parade.	Free

BRADY ST. FESTIVAL			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul., Sat. 11am-12am	Brady St.	Music, food, arts, crafts.	unk

CHARLES ALLIS ART MUSEUM			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Wed. thru Sun. 1-5pm	1801 N. Prospect Ave.	Self-guided tour of Tudor-style mansion of entrepreneur Charles Allis designed by Milwaukee architect Alexander Eschweiler in early 20th century	unk

### WALKING TOUR—BRADY STREET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late May-mid Oct. Sat.'s 1:30pm	Meets in front of Three Holy Women Catholic Parish (St. Hedwig Church) at 1702 N. Humboldt Ave.	Tour through the neighborhood on a half-mile stroll and learn about the area's Polish and Italian roots, the counter culture of the '60s and '70s and the area's recent urban renaissance.	\$10 adults, \$2 kids 7-17, free kids 6 and under

### MOVIE TIME AT THE CHARLES ALLIS MUSEUM

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Select Weds. 7:30pm	1801 N. Prospect Ave.	Classic films from the 30s and 40s from rare collection of Milwaukee film historian Dale Kuntz	unk

### THE GREEN GALLERY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Wed.-Sat. 2-6pm	1500 N. Farwell Ave.	Permanent and temporary art exhibits.	Free to look

### LOW COST MOVIES: ORIENTAL THEATER

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Sat., Sun. matinee	2230 N. Farwell Ave.	A Landmark arthouse theater.	Discounted

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

**Quotes from an oral history of the Lower East Side/Brady Street currently being conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.<sup>1</sup> About THEN.**

“There were always a lot of artistic types—people earning their incomes from art or just having art as a hobby. I remember walking my dog along Prospect in the early ‘60s. At the time I dreamt about living in the high rises. New ones were being added all the time. But you still had these little cafes run by European immigrants. There was this little one at Farwell and Lafayette I’d stop by. You could get a hamburger for about 50 cents. Or you could go to the Oriental Drugs and get an entire meal with sides for 70 cents. At the time I walked to work on North near Oakland and walk home to my place on Lafayette. I might stop and get a glass of wine at Vitucci’s for maybe 35 cents and then head for the Oriental for supper. You could live there so cheaply.”

“They kind of live and let live here. This is a neighborhood where you have many subgroups that live and intermingle together. Because it’s a small neighborhood they all shopped at the same stores and all run into each other.”

“There was a time when the Park East Freeway could have destroyed parts of the East Side like the freeways destroyed all the other neighborhoods, but we resisted.”

“In the area where I live now there are a number of front houses and back houses and people would group together and share the rent. The history of the music subculture is very strong.”

“I think on the East Side there was always the tolerance and often the celebration of diversity.”

### **Quotes from an oral history of the Lower East Side/Brady Street currently being conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.<sup>1</sup> About NOW.**

“By my time the discussions were on gentrification, social and racial and economic diversity, parking. That urban/suburban divide. How do we get people from the suburbs here without becoming the suburbs. The Brady Street Area Association—they’ve been around for a long time. They work with a lot of east side groups. And they are the model for how businesses and communities can work together. You always have issues of wanting businesses to be successful and on the other hand you have people saying, ‘but I want to sleep at night.’ They have a lot of savvy. They have a large board with a number of experts and sectors involved. They discuss things. They ask new businesses the right questions. They navigate a lot of potential conflicts and are very good at it.”

“The East Side is known to be very progressive. Among the older generations, there might be a sense of Nixonian conservatism still lingering. But probably 70 to 80 percent vote progressively.”

“Much of the Lower East Side is still the same as it was when I moved here in the ‘60s. It still attracts young people and progressive-thinking folks. Many of the same high rises are there on Prospect. Many of the stores have changed hands on Farwell. There was this little grocery store/deli near Irving Place that was run for years by a Polish family. I remember the store always looked so beat up and the help was always very crabby, but I was told that they got good benefits from the owners. Then sometime maybe around 2015 an Indian immigrant family bought the store. Soon the store got a refreshing facelift and the crabby help got exchanged for some of the most service-minded folks I’ve ever run into. Ah, you have to love the immigrants.”

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<sup>1</sup> 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-Mural at Kenilworth and Farwell



Today's neighborhood-Oriental Theater



Today's neighborhood-Charles Allis Art Museum



Today's neighborhood-Houses on Astor Street



Today's neighborhood-Wisconsin Conservatory of Music



Today's neighborhood-Holy Rosary Church – Oakland Avenue



Today's neighborhood-Brady Street

## OLDER PHOTOS FROM RESIDENTS



Local community gardening. (Photos courtesy of Dennis Lukaszewski of the University Extension.)

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](mailto:jflanthropologist@currently.com)

