

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Morgan Ave; **S**-W. Howard Ave;
E-S. 84th St, **W**-S. 92nd St

SOUTHWEST SIDE *Morgan Heights*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Morgan Heights is a mainly residential neighborhood with moderate population density. Most of the homes are ranch style from the late 20th century, interspersed with a few older bungalows and Cape Cods built from the early to mid-20th century.

Morgan Heights' topography is mainly flat to gently rolling hills. The wide, tree-lined streets follow a rectangular grid throughout the neighborhood. West of the Spanish Immersion School and Eighty-Eighth Street School is a small playfield, which is the only significant public green space in the neighborhood.

Morgan Heights has no actual business corridor and is home to just a few businesses along West Howard Avenue. See photos below.



Today's neighborhood-
Houses on S. 85th St. & W. Warnimont Ave.

HISTORY

At the time that the first homes were built in the Morgan Heights area, the neighborhood was in the unincorporated town of Greenfield, which once extended from 27th to 124th Streets and Greenfield to College Avenues.

Early populations

During the 1920s today's Southwest Side began to transition from a farming district to clusters of settlements that would become Milwaukee neighborhoods. Most of the early arrivals were Poles and Germans. Many settled first in the Jackson Park neighborhood, but some turned west on Oklahoma and ventured further into the countryside, creating a minor housing boom. However, the advent of the Great Depression, followed by World War II, temporarily reduced the rate of development.

Post World War II

A major housing boom *after* the war pressed many families of returning servicemen and others further west. Some were now migrating in from the Old (or Historic) South Side. At the same time, the City of Milwaukee was engaged in a massive annexation program in the area. Between 1948 and the mid-1950s, 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. Most of the new settlers continued to be Poles and Germans, but there was also a scattering of Finns, Russians, Albanians, Irish, and Austrians in the area. By 1956, Morgan Heights was nearly filled with just under 300 residences and many more under construction.

A good example of residents drawn to the area appears below in the family profile.

Morgan Heights family (1950s)

*Names selected from the 1956 City Directory in the Morgan Heights area
(additional information was found in U.S. Census and other public records)*

The Rozgas

Thaddeus (“Ted”) John Rozga had served in the Marines during World War II. Sometime after the end of the war, he and his wife Lois June (nee Currier) moved to 3643 South 88th Street in the Morgan Heights neighborhood. The couple had children Katherine, Deborah, Bishop, William, and Theresa. The family was Catholic and they worshipped at the Basilica of St. Josaphat, the parish of Ted’s youth.

A grandson of Polish immigrants, Ted had been raised in the Lincoln Village neighborhood ([see his natal family profile in this neighborhood](#)). His father,

John Rozga, ran a funeral home at 7th and Lincoln, which still is operating at that site. Ted lived with five siblings and his parents John and Katherine (a sister

had died young). Ted is pictured in his family photo as the youngest child in the center (*photo courtesy of John Rozga*). He grew up above the funeral home. Ted’s older brother Tom eventually took over the family business and then passed it on to his son John. Lincoln Village has always been the most densely populated neighborhood in Milwaukee, and this likely played a role in the Thaddeus Rozga family’s decision to move to the new neighborhood further west.

Ted went to work for the City of Milwaukee after returning from the war. He took a job in the Department of City Development. After Ted’s and Lois June’s children were grown, the couple retired in Clintonville, Wisconsin. Ted died in 2011. His funeral took place at his home at the Rozga Funeral Home.



Having developed late in Milwaukee history, the Morgan Heights neighborhood never established a commercial corridor. In 1956, the neighborhood had only five businesses, and most of these were independent contractors.

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 and Southwest Side, including Morgan Heights.

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 Morgan Heights neighborhood has just under 2,000 residents. Of these, nearly 9 in 10 are European Americans (the overwhelming majority claiming German or Polish ancestry). Most of the remaining population is Latino—over half with Mexican ancestry and most of the rest Puerto Ricans. There is also a scattering of African Americans, American Indians, Asians (all Indian) and people of multiple racial backgrounds in the area.

The median household income in Morgan Heights is nearly \$64,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle-income stratum. The occupations cited most often by adult residents are in the fields of administration, management, and food service. The neighborhood has more than four times the number of residents in the law enforcement field than other areas in Milwaukee.

Approximately three-quarters of the property units in Morgan Heights are owned. Residents use the NextDoor website to communicate with their neighbors (<https://nextdoor.com/neighborhood/morganheightswi--milwaukee--wi/>)

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.

ICE FISHING & WINTER SPORTS SHOW			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Dec., Fri. 12-7pm; Sat. 10am-7pm, Sun. 9am-2pm	Wisconsin State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th, West Allis	Rows of exhibits with products and services dedicated to the ice fishing and winter sports enthusiast.	Free
MILWAUKEE RV SHOW			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Feb. Thu. thru Sun.	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Displays and sales of a wide range of recreational vehicles including pop-up campers, travel trailers, 5th wheels and motorhomes.	unk
HMONG NEW YEAR			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Dec., Sat., Sun. 8am-5pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Celebration marks the end of the Hmong harvest season, which ends on November 31, and a time of several days of music, singing, dancing, games, and food.	unk

WONDERFUL WORLD OF WEDDINGS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jan., Sat., Sun. 10am-4:30pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	The latest trends in wedding gowns, tuxedos, photographers, florists, music, sample wedding cakes and food tastings, over 100 exhibitors.	unk

MILWAUKEE BOAT SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jan., one week, two weekends (except Mon & Tue)	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Wisconsin's largest boat show with over 400 boats from over 80 manufacturers, yachts, aluminum fishing boats, ski boats, pontoons, runabouts & jet skis, plus dock systems & marine accessories.	unk

GREAT LAKES PET EXPO

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jan. 1-5pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Wisconsin's largest charitable event that raises money for companion animals in Wisconsin. Featuring exhibitors including local Wisconsin rescues, pet products and services, great entertainment, and the best shopping for pet lovers.	unk

WOMAN UP!

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Feb. Sat. 10am-4pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	A day to celebrate all walks of a woman's life with 250+ vendors and experts in health care, fitness, finance, beauty, education and food as you shop, sample, and listen to presentations.	unk

MILWAUKEE/NARI SPRING IMPROVEMENT SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Feb. Thu-Sun., 12-8pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Home improvement trade show with special attractions and interactive entertainment.	unk

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL SPORTS SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Mar. Sun. thru Wed., see hours on website	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Exhibits on fishing, hunting, camping, boating and outdoor adventure.	unk

WINTER POWWOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Mar., Sat. 11am-10pm, Sun. 11am-6pm	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	American Indian traditional powwow with interactive tribal dances planned to include the general public, with extensive marketplace, traditional foods, and family friendly environment.	unk

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Jun., Jul., Aug. Wed.'s, 6-11pm	State Fair Park, Budweiser Pavilion, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Milwaukee's most popular local bands entertain thousands of fans each week at this indoor/outdoor family friendly concert venue.	Free

GREEK FEST

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jun. Fri./Sat. 11am-11pm, Sun. 11am-9pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Festival of Greek food, dance, concerts, marketplace.	Free

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR--\$2 THURSDAY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Aug., Thu. (promotion ends at 4pm)	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Barnyard animals, crafts, live music, big name entertainers, food, exhibits, and, of course, a midway.	\$2 with 2 non-perishable food items or donation

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR—FAMILY FUN MONDAY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Aug., Mon. 8am-6pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Barnyard animals, crafts, live music, big name entertainers, food, exhibits, and, of course, a midway.	unk

HOLIDAY FOLK FAIR INTERNATIONAL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid November, Fri.- Sun.	State Fair Park Expo Center; 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis	Multicultural festival of music, food, dance, and the arts.	unk

HORSE EXPO

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Sep., Thu. 7am- 9pm, Fri. 7am-5pm, Sat. 7am-9pm, Sun. 7am-1pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Wisconsin State 4-H horse expo including English and Western pleasure, showmanship, trail, and more.	Free

MAKER FAIRE MILWAUKEE

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Sep., Sat. 9am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Showcase of invention, creativity, tech enthusiasts, crafters, artists, educators, tinkerers, students and others.	Free

HARVEST FAIR

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Sep., Fri. 5-11pm, Sat. 9am-11pm, Sun. 9am-5pm	State Fair Park, 640 S. 84th St., West Allis	Autumn fair that features rides, food, games such as pumpkin bowling, and contests such as the pumpkin chuckin'.	Free

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST FAMILY FESTIVAL--GREENFIELD

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul., Fri. 5-11pm, Sat. 3-11pm, Sun. 12-9pm	8500 W. Cold Spring Road, Greenfield	Festival including rides, games, wine cellar, bingo, food, music, and more.	Free

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

If you are a resident of this neighborhood and have an interesting observation to make about your neighborhood, please send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS

Todays neighborhood-
Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church



Todays neighborhood-Houses on S. 89th St. south of W. Warnimont Ave. (1)



Today's neighborhood-
Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School-
Lower Campus



Today's neighborhood-Houses on S. 89th St. south of W. Warnimont Ave. (2)

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



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