

Approximate boundaries:  
N-W. Concordia Ave; S-W. Center St;  
E-N. 89<sup>th</sup> St; W-Menomonee River Pkwy

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Mount Mary*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Bordering Wauwatosa, Mount Mary has a residential area of high population density to the north and east of the Mount Mary campus. The area south of Concordia Avenue and west of North 92nd Street is mainly occupied by Mount Mary University and a few residential streets south of the campus. Some of the streets follow a rectangular grid except for the western part of the neighborhood where the streets shadow the curve of the Menomonee River. The main housing types are Colonial and 1950s to 1970s ranch-style homes. In the eastern part of the neighborhood there are a number of Cape Cods and a few Colonial-style houses.

The main green space is in open areas around the Mount Mary campus buildings. Additional green space lies along the Menomonee River Parkway, but most of this is in Wauwatosa. The neighborhood's topography is mainly flat but interspersed with a few rolling hills. See neighborhood photos below.

## HISTORY

Mount Mary, as a neighborhood, owes much of its development to two events that took place in 1928. The first event was the platting of the Colonial Highland Subdivision.

A large section of the northern half of today's Mount Mary neighborhood was platted in 1928 by E.H. Mushlmeier, president of the Burleigh Realty Company, as the Colonial Highland Subdivision. Fond of anything colonial, Mushlmeier named one of the streets Colonial Drive. The first house built in the area, at today's 3241 North 97th Street, was in the Colonial Revival style (see photo below). Many built later replicated this style.

The second event was the arrival of Mount Mary University, which gave the neighborhood its name. In September 1928, the cornerstone of the then St. Mary's College was laid at its current location on an 80-acre site in the southern section of the neighborhood. Founded in 1913 in Prairie du Chien, the School Sisters of Notre Dame established St.

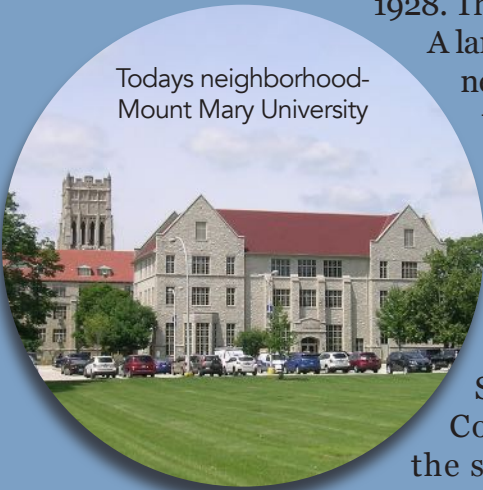
Mary's Institute, introduced a college curriculum, received a charter from the State of Wisconsin, and opened the state's first four-year, degree-granting Catholic college for women. They moved St. Mary's to Milwaukee, renamed it Mount Mary, and opened the doors to students in 1929 (see photo below).

## Early population

While the two events at the close of the 1920s might have led to a population boom in the decade that followed, no such development took place. What did happen was the Great Depression. Settlers merely trickled into the area for the next decade. Most of these were Germans and a handful of Irish and Poles moving in from near north side neighborhoods. By 1940, today's Mount Mary neighborhood had fewer than 30 residences and 1 business. Most of the residences were on North 90th Street.

The following page profiles one of these early settlers, randomly selected from the *Milwaukee City Directory*.

Today's neighborhood-  
Mount Mary University



## **Mount Mary random family (1930s)** *(Information from U.S. Census and other public records)*

### **The Roggenbauers/Hopkins**

In many ways the Roggenbauer/Hopkins family members were typical of children of immigrants.

Sometime between 1936 and 1940, the Roggenbauer/Hopkins family moved to 2764 North 91st Street from their previous home on West Atkinson. The household head was Anton Roggenbauer, b. 1891, the son of German immigrant father Ambros and mother Theresia Roggenbauer. Also in the household was Anton's wife, Frances Roggenbauer (nee Hopkins), b. 1896, and her widowed mother, Mary/"Minnie" Hopkins (nee Jones), b. 1863 to Irish immigrants.

Anton and Frances had married for the first time in their forties and never had children. Frances' family had lived in Texas until the death of her father in 1911. By 1920, Frances had moved north to Milwaukee, was living with her sister's family in the Bay View neighborhood, and managed to get a job as a bookkeeper for a shoe factory. She may have been working to save money to buy a home in Milwaukee for her mother, who was still in Texas with her sons. By 1930, Frances was living with her mother in Milwaukee in a home they owned on North 58th Street.

Anton had also lived with his parents until he married. Anton's family had been working class and large, with at least seven children. They'd lived in a rented house on North 5th Street and his father worked as a railroad blacksmith. Although only having gone through the 8th grade, Anton secured and maintained a high-paying position as a clerk in an insurance company, a job he'd held since his twenties. According to the 1940 census, Anton was earning \$3,100 annually, nearly three times the U.S. median annual income of \$1,368 for 1940. Immigration records also show that Anton had traveled to Havana Cuba in his thirties—a trip not likely related to his job.

The home the couple purchased in the Mount Mary neighborhood in the late 1930s was valued at \$9,000, a very high price for Great Depression times, when homes could be purchased for under \$1,000. No doubt Anton and Frances had saved considerable nest eggs working all those years while living with their parents.

No records were found on the death of "Minnie" Hopkins, but Anton died in 1955 at age 64 and Frances in 1979 at age 83.

Between 1940 and 1960 the Mount Mary neighborhood began to attract considerably more residents. The neighborhood also developed a modest business corridor on West Burleigh Street.

#### *Burleigh Street*

Burleigh Street in Mount Mary is near the center of the neighborhood, just north of the Mount Mary campus. Below is a snapshot of the sparse commercial properties on this street in 1960. See summary below.

<i>Addresses on W. Burleigh in the Mount Mary Neighborhood in 1960</i>	<i>Businesses, offices, or apartments from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
8934	Apartments
9000	Ray Smith Pharmacy
9009	Carvel Dari-Freeze Stores Dairy Bar
9014	Krause Market Grocery
9020	Wisconsin Electric Power Company Burleigh Substation
9035	Dibb's Texaco Service Station
9109	Schwid's Drive-In Restaurant
9128	Bohlman Service Station
9133	College Service Station
9200	Bill's Service Station
9218	Cover Girl Studio Beauty Shop R.J. Schaezner Dentist
9220	Allied Industrial Workers of America Local #232
9222	Showalter Realty Showalter Homes Jank's Bakery

#### Summary and notes from public records:

- The relatively large proportion (40 percent) of businesses that serves people in automobiles on this stretch of Burleigh was likely a response to the commuting student population coming to the neighborhood. The corner of 92nd and Burleigh had three gas stations.
- Carvel Dari-Freeze used to sell ice cream via bicycle vendors, including Flying Saucer Ice Cream Sandwiches for a dime.
- The Texas Company was another name for Texaco. Texaco purchased the Illinois-based Indian Oil Company. This expanded Texaco's refining and marketing base in the Midwest. In the 1930s, Texaco introduced Fire Chief gasoline nationwide, a so-called "super-octane" motor fuel that was supposed to exceed government standards for gasoline for fire engines and other emergency vehicles. This again expanded the company nationwide.
- The Showalter family remains active in the real estate industry today.

## Current populations (as of 2021)

The Mount Mary neighborhood today has just over 2,000 residents. Nearly 9 in 10 are European Americans, with almost half claiming ancestry in Germany and the rest mostly Irish or Polish. Approximately 1 in 15 residents are African Americans. There is also a scattering of people of multiple backgrounds, Asians (mostly of Chinese and Asian Indian descent), American Indians, and Latinos (mostly with Mexican ancestry) in the area.

The median household income is just over \$32,000 annually, placing the neighborhood in the lower middle-income stratum. Mount Mary is a highly educated neighborhood, with over half of the residents' holding degrees beyond high school (probably reflecting a graduate student population and university staff/faculty). The highest number of occupations in the neighborhood are in the fields of administration, education, and management. Mount Mary has over three times the number of residents in the field of engineering than the proportions in other Milwaukee neighborhoods.

The school of Mount Mary, whose campus occupies about one-quarter of the neighborhood, became Mount Mary University In 2013. With nearly 1,500 students, the university offers more than 30 academic majors as well as 8 master's and doctoral degree programs.

## 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.

### MOUNT MARY STARVING ARTISTS' SHOW

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Sep., Sun. 10am-5pm	Southeast of Mt. Mary Campus along Hadley.	Exhibit and sale of artists selected by juried process, \$100 or less.	unk

### HALLOWEEN IN COOPER PARK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Oct., Sat. 11am-1pm	Cooper Park, 86th & Locust	Halloween celebration.	Free

### JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--ENDERIS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4, 8:30-11:30am	Enderis Playfield, 2978 N. 72nd	Parade, games, music, watermelon-eating contest.	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 Mount Mary and have an interesting observation to make about this neighborhood, send your quote to [JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)*

## PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on Colonial Dr.



Today's neighborhood-  
97th St. & Colonial Dr.



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on W. Auer Ave.



Today's neighborhood-Mount Mary University

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)