

**Approximate boundaries:**  
N-W. Fond Du Lac Ave; S-W. Burleigh St;  
E-N. Sherman Blvd; W-W. Roosevelt Dr

# NORTHWEST SIDE *Sunset Heights*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Sunset Heights is a neighborhood of moderate population density with a large number of two-story Tudor-style homes with mainly brick or stone facades. Sunset Heights has over one hundred times the number of religious organizations per square mile than the United States as a whole.

Burleigh Street is the neighborhood's main business corridor. See neighborhood photos.

## HISTORY

There are six neighborhoods that comprise a larger area known as Sherman Park. Sunset Heights is a neighborhood in the center of the Sherman Park complex.

Residents began to settle Sherman Park in the late teens and early twenties of the 20th century. Many were attracted to the suburban look of the area that at this time was the edge of the city. Developers had created wide, tree-lined streets and boulevards, but the beautiful homes were the neighborhood's signature.

### Early population

The first arrivals to the area were primarily Germans and Czechs migrating from various Milwaukee neighborhoods. Later migrants were diverse groups representing over 20 nations from nearly every continent. However, the largest of the later arriving groups were Jewish and African American. To understand the later migration patterns, one must look to another Milwaukee neighborhood that thrived in the middle of the 20th century.

### *Bronzeville origins*

The Bronzeville community had been home to the ancestors of many key players in the current Sherman Park neighborhood. The community was located in an area between downtown Milwaukee and North Avenue and roughly 1st Street to 12th Street (the widest of the disputed boundaries offered by local historians).

The area had first been home to a large segment of Milwaukee's German community. By 1910 a 10,000-strong population of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Ukraine had settled in the area. Within a few years African Americans from the South began their Great Migration to the North in response to needs to fill jobs in mainly urban centers. By the 1950s the black population in Milwaukee was nearly 50,000. See more on Bronzeville in the [Halyard Park neighborhood](#).

Two institutions that would later be critical to the stability of one of Sherman Park's neighborhoods were founded in the Bronzeville area. Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital—St.



Today's neighborhood-  
Public art at 60th and Roosevelt

Joseph's Campus (also known as St. Joseph's) had its roots in a little house on Walnut Street and built its first hospital on 4th & Reservoir. The second is Beth Jehudah synagogue, which was on 11th and North Avenue until the 1950s. Both institutions are today in the St. Joseph's neighborhood of the Sherman Park complex.

Many of the older activist families in Sherman Park lived in or had close relatives in the Bronzeville area before migrating northwest. In fact, the Bronzeville area had two dynasty families that would later be critical to the development of Sherman Park and surrounding areas. The Twerskis were one dynasty family. They had founded the Beth Jehudah synagogue. The Coggs were another dynasty family and today occupy many leadership roles in Milwaukee politics.

What happened to Bronzeville? Bronzeville was leveled in the 1950s and 1960s. During these years, two government programs were displacing major populations in Milwaukee. One program was the urban renewal, which had been designed to improve central city housing. During the same time period, the Milwaukee County Expressway Commission was building major freeway corridors in the heart of the city. One corridor ran right through the heart of Bronzeville. Over 8,000 African American dwelling units were lost and nearly 100 percent of its business district.

### *Early businesses*

The main business district in the Sunset Heights/Sherman Park neighborhood has been along Burleigh Street. Per the Milwaukee City Directory, these were the businesses on Burleigh between 45th and 60th Streets in 1940 and 1950.

## 1940

<i>Address (W. Burleigh)</i>	<i>Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
4505	Emile C. Horn Drugs
4506	Zoeller's Associated Foods
4508	Erwin Ballmann meats
4510	Burton's Photo Shop
4515	John Gleich Baker
4515	Sherman Park Hardware
4515	Hugo Kneer Tavern
4517	Sherman Park Shoppe Inc. (dry goods)
4518	Fayette Beauty Salon
4520	Lakritz Food Mart
4521	Aristotle Staver Shoe shop
4523-25	Walter Liermann Shoe Repair/Tailor
4524	Charm Sweet Shop
4526	Crimi Umberto Barber
4532	Martin Kramarich Tavern

<i>Address (W. Burleigh)</i>	<i>Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
4602	Johnson's Service Station
4610	Clark's Beer Depot
4614	Schroeder Bros. Real Estate
4616	Hugo Keihl Flower Shop
4618	Pearl Hosiery Co.
4620	Samuel Krakow Optometrist
4622	Lady Sherman Beauty Shop
4624	Roger Shermak Gifts (with postal station)
4632	Sherman Theater
4634	Samuel W. Feldman Grocer
4642	Schwister's Super Service station
4705 (apts)	Israel Kastrul (repairman)
4711	Heldrick Liberty Barber
4712-16	Paepke's Home Bakery
4713 (apts)	
4715	LaBelle's Grocery
4719 (apts)	
4720 (apts)	
4721	Manor Beauty Salon
4723	Man Lee Laundry
4725	Joseph Verzal Shoe Repair
4726	Venetian Cleaners & Furriers
4727	Frank Fritz Tailor
4728	Aristotle Staver Hat Cleaner
4729	Fleischer's Meat Market
4803	Louis Kaufmann & Sons Funeral
4821 (apts)	
4822	Fred W. Weiss Auto Repair

<i>Address (W. Burleigh)</i>	<i>Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
4829	Myers Food Shop & Deli
4833	Petite Beauty Salon
4900	M & N Oil Co. The Filling Station
4930	Alvin Bartelt Grocery & Meats
4932 (apts)	
4934	Rustic Gardens Tavern
5000	Freeze & Kausch Inc. Appliances
5002 (apts)	
5004	Beauty Clinic
5006	Henry Mayer Barber
5010 (apts)	
5022 (apts)	
5028	Emelie Christeck Tavern (husband Ernest may have died) German born
5030	Emelie Christeck Dentist
5032	Rilling Pharmacy
5101	Rudolph Henkelman Filling Station
5125	Lyal O. Thompson Filling Station
5226	Pentecostal Evangelical Church
5300	Marquardt's Pharmacy
5304	Max Berlowitz Grocery & Meat
5413 (vacant)	
5512	Raymond Ebel Grocery & Meats
5514	Leonard Johnson Barber

Address (W. Burleigh)	Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u>
5516	Green Log Tavern
5615	Aaron Sehreny 6 Junk
5625	Robert Schmideler Filling Station
5632-36	Roland Ward Grocer
5722	Joseph Schmidt Filling Station
5911	Baermann Florists
5929	Henry C. Glienke Grocer and Meats (2)

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

- The proprietors in 1940 were highly diverse.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, most shopkeepers lacked a high school education.
- Emil C. Horn, the druggist, was a 3rd generation American with German ancestry. His father, Henry C. Horn, had owned the drugstore before him. Emil was one of the few proprietors on the street with a high school education.
- Hugo Adolph Otto Kneer, the barkeeper, was the son of German immigrants. He and his wife Margie lived on Burleigh, probably at the same address as his tavern.
- Aristotle Staver, with the shoe shop and the hat cleaning shop, was a Greek immigrant. He also lived on Burleigh in 1940, probably at the same address as his shop. Informants in the oral history project of Sherman Park (see below) often referred to a time in mid-century when there was a significant Greek population in the neighborhood.
- Crimi Umberto, the barber, was Italian.
- Samuel Feldman, the grocer, was a Jewish immigrant from Russia.
- Mon Lee, with the laundry, was a Chinese immigrant. He was a single man and lived on Burleigh, probably at the same address as his business.
- Louis Kaufman, the funeral director, was the son of German immigrants. Although he occupied a place of status in the neighborhood, he only had a 6th grade education.
- Emelie Christeck, the dentist and barkeep, was a widowed immigrant from Germany. Even though she is listed as a dentist in the 1940 Milwaukee City Directory, she only went to 5th grade in school.
- Roland Ward, the grocer, was a Canadian immigrant

## 1950

<i>Address (W. Burleigh)</i>	<i>Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
4504	Opitz Erhard Gift Shop
4506	Jacobis Lloyd Grocery & meats
4508	Robinevitz Merris Meats
4510	Jacklin Heating & Sheet Metal
4514	Sherman Park Hardware Store
4515	Elmer Klauk Tavern
4517	Sherman Park Shoppe (dry goods)
4518	Natco Service Motion Picture Films
4519	Elmer Klauk/Aristotle Staver
4521	Aristotle Shaver Shoe Repair
4523	Walens Electrical Appliance
4524	Charm Sweet Shop
4525	Moeller Shoe Repair
4526	Luck Meyer Meats
4532	Phillip Yahnke Tavern
4602	Natural Tea Co.
4607	Anton Romyak Gas Station
4610	Merkaw Parks Men's Clothing
4612	Sydney Rubenstein Dentist
4614	Mrs. Petersen's Bakery
4616	Tompkins Ice Cream Co.
4618	Wilson's Apparel
4620	Spic & Span Dry Cleaners
4622	Sherman Beauty Salon
4623	Kohl Brothers Grocery (this would then be Max & Jack? Or another brother?)
4624	Mollgaard Co. Real Estate
4626	Jack Berman Variety Store
4630	Fritz Von Grossman Architect

<i>Address (W. Burleigh)</i>	<i>Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
4630	Donald Grieb Designer
4630	John. B. Sprague Chiropractor
4630	Millaeger Well Drilling Co.
4630	Michael Cavanaugh Dentist
4630	Donald W. Guepe Dentist
4630	Leonard Schneberger Physician
4630	Merklein, Knauf & Cummings Lawyers
4630	E. W. Voss Insurance
4630	North American Life Insurance of Chicago
4632	Sherman Theater
4634	Shroeder Bros. Building Contractors
4642	GCA Tractor & Equipment Co.
4642	J&E Auto Service
4704	Melvin Collins Gas Station
4705 (apts)	
4711	Liberty Heldrick Barber
4713 (apts)	
4714	George L. Paepke
4715-17	Torp Sports Mart
4716	Robert Harvey Bakery
4719 (apts)	
4720 (apts)	
4721	Manor Beauty Salon
4725	Robert Lovell Shoe Repair
4726	Frank Fritz Tailor
4728	Clark's Beer Depot
4729	Frank Fleischer Grocery & Meats
4803	Louis Kaufmann & Sons Funeral
4809	Hilbert Kaufmann

<i>Address (W. Burleigh)</i>	<i>Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
4812	Pyramid Savings & Loan
4816	Umberto Crimi Barber
4818	Umberto Crimi Barber
4821 (apts)	
4822	Himmelstein Service Station
4829	Charlotte Meyers Confectioners
4833	Petite Beauty Salon
4900	Peyton's Super Service Station
4930	Alvin Bartlett Grocery & Meats
4932 (apts)	
4934	Rustic Gardens Tavern
5000	Northwest Radio & Appliance
5002 (apts)	
5004	VE Kennedy Co. Cup Manufacturers
5006	Howard Hannot Barber
5010 (apts)	
5022 (apts)	
5028	Klein's Taverns
5032	Rilling Pharmacy
5101	Edw. Weiss Gas Station
5226	Pentecostal Evangelical Lutheran Church
5300	Marquardt Drugs
5304	Martin Wengler Grocery & Meats
5501	Rudolph Muelhaus Physician
5512	Carl Kaddats Meats

<i>Address (W. Burleigh)</i>	<i>Business/organization name from <u>Milwaukee City Directory</u></i>
5512	Norwood Food Market
5514	Windowcraft Studio
5516	Ray's Green Log Tavern
5515	Aaron Sebreny Junk Dealer
5625	Rohland Mesenbourg Gas Station
5632	Sydney Burr Barber
5722	Burleigh Super Service
5800	Baermann Florists

**Notes per census and other records (note that 1950 census records were unavailable at the time of this compilation, so limited information was found):**

- The pattern on Burleigh remained the same in 1950 as it was in 1940. Most of the proprietors were immigrants of diverse backgrounds and almost none but the professionals had high school educations.
- Erhard Opitz with the gift shop, was a German immigrant. He was only 24 in 1950.
- Morris Robinevitz, the butcher, was a Jewish immigrant from Russia. He had only completed the 3rd grade.
- Aristotle Shaver, the Greek immigrant, still owned his hat and shoe businesses.
- Kohl Brothers Grocery might have been Max & Jack Kohl of future Senator Herb Kohl's family.
- Donald Grieb was an architect with a college degree. He was raised in the Sherman Park neighborhood and his father was a building contractor.
- Frank Fritz, the tailor, was an Austrian immigrant who had been raised on Galena.
- Carl Kaddats, the butcher, was the grandson of German immigrants. He'd been raised on Hawley Rd.
- The most likely correct record for Sydney Burr was the 1940 census that lists him as an American Indian who had been raised in Shawano Wisconsin. He would have been Menominee.

During these decades, Sunset Heights had a number of interesting residents. Below are two examples.

## Sunset Heights resident profile

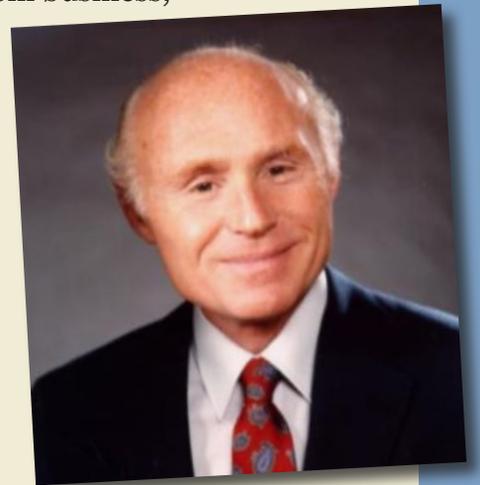
*Photos and additional information was found in public records in Ancestry.com.*

### The Kohl family

Sometime in the 1930s, Max and Mary (nee Hiken) Kohl moved from Clement Avenue in Bay View to a newly purchased home in the Sunset Heights/Sherman Park neighborhood. Their house, at 3259 North 51st Street, was valued at \$1,500, a modest price even by Great Depression standards. Max was a Jewish immigrant from Poland and Mary a Jewish immigrant from Russia. Although Max had only completed the 7th grade, he proved to be an aggressive entrepreneur. He'd already opened a grocery store in Bay View and was on his way to opening several more.

The couple's children all eventually played roles in the Kohl business, which over the years expanded to 50 grocery stores, as well as several department stores, pharmacies, and liquor stores. But the child that grew to the greatest heights in terms of service to Milwaukee and Wisconsin was Herbert Kohl, called "Herb." (See photo<sup>1</sup>.)

Having earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1956 (where he roomed with future baseball commissioner Bud Selig—see [Enderis Park neighborhood](#)) and an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1958, Herb Kohl rose to the office of president of Kohl's. Some years after selling the Kohl's empire in 1979, Herb sought a new career in politics. He ran for and was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1989, where he served until 2013 when he did not seek reelection.



But Herb Kohl had already been heeding another calling. Following the example of his former roommate, Bud Selig, who had purchased the bankrupt Seattle Pilots in 1970 and brought the team to Milwaukee as the Milwaukee Brewers, Herb Kohl purchased the Milwaukee Bucks of the NBA in 1985. One of the goals of the purchase was to ensure that the team remained in Milwaukee. In 2014, Kohl sold the bucks to Wesley Edens and Marc Lasry, negotiating a deal that included a new arena and would again ensure the team's tenure in Milwaukee.

See a resident profile of another interesting Sunset Heights resident below.

## Sunset Heights resident profile

*Photos and additional information was found in public records in Ancestry.com.*

### Jerome Silberman

Sometime in the 1930s the family of Jerome Silberman (see photo<sup>ii</sup>) moved from a rented unit on North 56th Street to another rented unit at 3210 North 44th in the Sunset Heights/Sherman Park neighborhood. Jerome, the son of William and Jeanne Silberman, Jewish immigrants from Russia, took an early interest in acting when he saw his older sister Corrinne perform in a play. His mother, hoping to advance Jerome's aspirations, sent him to Black-Foxe, a military institute in Hollywood. Unfortunately, being the only Jewish student at the school, Jerome was bullied and sexually assaulted, according to his later writings. This may have been one reason why the youth later began using the more Gentile-sounding moniker of Gene Wilder as his stage name.

Jerome quickly left Black-Foxe, returned to Sherman Park, and got involved in local theater companies. He attended Washington High School where he was classmates with many Jewish students, including Bud Selig and Herb Kohl, and graduated in 1951. He later graduated from college.

Gene Wilder began his acting career on the stage and then moved to television. His first major film role was in *The Producers*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor. He later starred in and co-wrote *Young Frankenstein* and *Blazing Saddles* for which he received multiple Academy Award nominations, including for Best Adapted Screenplay.

Wilder is perhaps best known for his role in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. He also directed several films.

Besides his career in the entertainment industry, Wilder became a philanthropist. When his third wife, Gilda Radner, died of ovarian cancer, he helped found the Gilda Radner Ovarian Cancer Detection Center in Los Angeles and co-founded Gilda's Club, a series of cancer support centers throughout the US, including branches in Milwaukee and Madison.



## Current populations (as of 2021)

As new populations left the central city and moved into the area, the neighborhood faced its own challenges. At times residents struggled to understand cultural differences, a challenge that still exists today.

The ethnic groups themselves were internally diverse, and some moved in and out of the area. The history of the Jewish population in the neighborhood was particularly complex. The original Jewish population was comprised of Reform and non-practicing Jews, with a few Orthodox.

When this population migrated out of the neighborhood and into the suburbs, they were eventually replaced by a strong Orthodox population that lives in all of Sherman Park today, and worships at Beth Jehudah Synagogue. They developed their own self-help organization and school (Yeshiva Elementary School).

The largest ethnic group today in Sunset Heights is African American, comprising about 7 in 10 residents. Jews and other European Americans comprise about one-quarter of the population, with Latinos and Asians making up the remainder.

Approximately one-third of Sunset Heights's population lives in low income households, or households with annual incomes of less than \$25,000. This is a typical proportion of low income households for Milwaukee.

The neighborhood is well educated. There is a substantially higher proportion of people with bachelor's degrees in Sunset Heights than in the city of Milwaukee or Milwaukee metro.

## INTERESTING FEATURES

- **Public art**, at 60th St. and Roosevelt Dr.
- **Sherman Theater building**, at 4634 W. Burleigh St., a site of ongoing development.
- **Burleigh Street Community Development Corp.**, at 4630 W. Burleigh St., a community and business revitalization organization.

## 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.

FREE FAMILY SWIM			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Tue. 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	Families, free

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

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 oral history of Sherman Park conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc. in 2009: About THEN**

“In the ‘70s the Sherman Park Association began because they had problems with block busting. Real estate companies were trying to do block busting and there was a flight from the community by middle-class Jewish people [because] the Milwaukee Public Schools were starting to slip. Up until that time, Washington High School had been one of the premier schools in the city. Marshall was a very good school. All of a sudden there was a perceptible change in the public schools. Things you were wise enough to see what was happening. Instead of doing things to deal with the influx of children they were seeing, they began to dumb down the curriculum. They started doing things which threatened the ability of middle-class education-minded parents to make sure that their children had educational options. So they began to leave the community, but it was because of the post-World War II culture, they had the money. They moved to Whitefish Bay, Shorewood, Nicolet, places where they wanted their children to be. It was still for public education, but public education with standards. And it was clear that MPS was breaking down.”

“I mean we knew the Jews were different because they did different things on Fridays and Saturdays. And Italians were different because they were the ones shouting across the street to each other to borrow who-knows-what, like sauce for cooking dinner. And Italians were different because, and this was especially [NAME’s] house. When I walked into the house there was always this big bowl of meat. And the smell was like a garlicky meat smell, and you’d smell that and you’d notice that. . . . In other words there was always a distinct odor, and it was always associated with food. It wasn’t that they weren’t clean. It was just a food odor and it hit you right away when you went into the house. And that was probably associated with a different ethnicity, undoubtedly, but we didn’t pay any attention—we didn’t care if someone was Polish or German. We didn’t really discuss it. You didn’t study it in school, and nobody was prodding you to notice those differences.”

“There was a lot of community life back then, less stress on cars, coming out of the Great Depression where you couldn’t do anything anyway. There was a sense of community that can’t be duplicated now. People drive to work that’s not in the neighborhood; some don’t even worship in the neighborhood.”

“Henry Maier said those people in Sherman Park are really powerful, but we weren’t shacking the signs. We were eloquent and quiet [and] who could move mountains.”

### **Quotes from oral history of Sherman Park conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc. in 2009: About NOW**

“I focus on just the Sherman Park area, but people moved because they wanted to be a part of an ethnically and cultural diverse community. Which in Milwaukee that is not as common. But when I came to Milwaukee this area around the church was about 70 percent European American and 30 percent African American. Now it’s the reverse.”

“Just as in part with gay people moving into a heavily religious community, we actually, at one time, at the Sherman Park Community Association, had some rather frank discussion with some of the people who were in the leadership role of that part of the gay community. They were recognized as the leadership, although they didn't speak for everybody. But we had some very frank discussions on how to exist as a community. It was actually very interesting because what we talked about is if what they were seeking in the community was validation as a group they weren't going to get it. If what they were looking for was human beings as neighbors as people, they could have that. I think they were believably receptive. You are talking about a very right wing [Jewish] Orthodox community and a Catholic community--people who are not interested in validating anyone's lifestyle. But we made a conscious decision that wasn't going to be a part of their effort where they lived and I think it's been very successful.”

“Well, I think the Sherman Park Community Association was in the lead in terms of being the political arm of making sure we created an environment in which anybody that wanted to move into the community could move in. We worked with the policemen about sensitivity. . . We sponsored a programs called the Operations of Interfaith and we had a weekend retreat at the Cousin's Center that was all Sherman Park people and they had tremendous problems. Interfaith had to really reach out to make sure there were blacks and Muslims. I think Blacks and Muslims were uncomfortable. I ran a program for seven years called the Sherman Park Jewish Initiative which I did outreach to bring young Orthodox Jewish families into the neighborhood. We were in a unique position of reaching out to people to try to increase the size of the neighborhood. In the seven years that we ran the program we reached about 70 families basically from around the United States who wanted to become part of a nurturing community. At the very same time there was a renewed interest by middle to upper middle class black families. They were interested in the same real estate market. They kind of had an edgy feeling about us. They felt we had an inside track on some of the better housing. The fact was that we did, but not for the reasons that they thought. We were just more established in the community. So a lot of people called me and said somebody told me you know a lot of people who are interested in buying houses. And I did. So, we had moments. The relationship we enjoy today with the black community is much more in the nature of tolerance rather than celebratory, where the relation we have with the Catholic and Christian community is far more advanced.”

“There is a certain level of social consciousness here . . . they are concerned about property values, social justice issues. People have enough income and enough time and education to care about the bigger issues. That's the common thing—take care of properties—absentee owners property can go to hell—religion or color does not matter; we can turn out people to bash city hall if need be—we are a politically aware group.”

“The churches are very strong: Sherman Park Lutheran, the Community Baptist on North Avenue, Zion has a food pantry, Parklawn, Sherman Park Assembly of God, the synagogue.”

“Some of our neighbors invite us to barbecues. They would invite people from work and they would invite people from the neighborhood. So they would use food, the ritual of food, the last supper, they would use food to get people to come together. It is also an opportunity to show off different styles of barbecue. It is clear, I'm not an aficionado. There are some barbecue

techniques that we associated from the middle South, like Kentucky and Tennessee. So people barbecue that way. Then we see the brushing on of the barbecue sauce and that. I'm not sure if that's a northern interpretation of that, we saw that with [FAMILY and FAMILY]. And then, we get what you might call the Louisiana style of barbecue.”

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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-  
Public art at 60th and Roosevelt



Today's neighborhood-  
Businesses on 45th and Burleigh



Today's neighborhood-  
Front yard at 54th and Roosevelt



Today's neighborhood-  
Sherman Theater building,  
site of ongoing development

<sup>i</sup> Photo attribution: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f2/Herbert\\_Kohl\\_official\\_photo.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f2/Herbert_Kohl_official_photo.jpg)

<sup>ii</sup> Photo attribution: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Gene\\_Wilder\\_1970.JPG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Gene_Wilder_1970.JPG)

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)

## MEMIORS OF A FORMER SUNSET HEIGHTS RESIDENT

### **Sue Bosman provided UrbAn a brief memior of her early years in the Sunset Heights neighborhood**

“I am a 6th generation Milwaukeean, with ancestors arriving in 1852 living on the same block as Increase Lapham. I am the 4th generation to live in the Sherman Park neighborhood. My great-grandparents built their home at 3254 N. 53rd Street, one of the first homes in the area. My father, their grandson, lived in this house attending St. Catherine’s. He remembered the area was abundant with creeks and ponds from Keefe Avenue to Center Street and beyond. My Dad hung out with his friend at Marquardt’s Drug Store on 53rd and Burleigh as a teen. His mother, who was an entertainer, lived in this house. Her best friend was Gilda Gray, silent screen star and inventor of ‘The Shimmy,’ the two of them lived previously in taverns on National Avenue, Gilda came to 53rd Street to visit when in town.

I remember when the riots happened, army trucks and even a tanks drove down my street. We would put two AM radios together and tune in to a forgotten frequency and listened to all the police calls. I wandered the streets with friends starting in 1969, knowing every single building, houses, schools and secret hideouts. I attended Sherman School. My mother worked at St. Joe’s where I was born. My favorite hangout was Petroff’s, 53rd and Burleigh and the laundromat.

When I started genealogy, I never gave it a second thought that my ancestors wandered this neighborhood, until I gathered stories. My Great grandmother, her daughters and friends would dress up in their fur coats and walk up and down Burleigh stopping at every tavern. As a small child my Dad would take me to Joe and Irene’s Green Log. There was a vacant lot on the northwest corner of 55th and Burleigh where a paper bag was found with a human hand. This hand ‘matched’ other body parts found in Chicago. My Great grandfather once went to one of the taverns on Burleigh in the 1920s where a man was painting artwork by the front door. My great grandfather bought it for about \$5.00. The artist then came in the bar and drank up his earnings. I have that painting.

My maternal grandmother, mother, uncles and myself attended Steuben Junior High on 52nd and North, and Washington High School. My maternal grandmother attended Golda Maier School WITH Golda before she was Golda. My maternal grandmother and uncle, and paternal great aunt passed away at St. Joseph’s. Myself and my sister were born there. Our lives for generations lived in this neighborhood. I formed lifelong friendships with people from there, we lovingly speak of our memories on Burleigh. My ancestors lived and died in various homes in the same neighborhood, I had no idea until I did genealogy. Those homes are still there. My Jewish ancestors moved there to be with other Jews long before WWII. My paternal side moved there from the Southside of Milwaukee where the Poles lived. I have traced my ancestors in Milwaukee starting in 1854 to the present. I remember the milkman, mailman, am still friends with the paperboy, I witnessed the last scissors and knife sharpener with his pony, the ragman with his pony and the cards and stationery lady. I even have my skeleton key to the duplex. I came home when the street lights came on, and bought cigarettes for 32 cents with a note from my mom at Marquardt’s drug store. I played in the ash bins in the alleys, played GI Joe with the boys and listened to the garage bands until one by one they left for the Vietnam war. I knew the names of all the policemen who stopped to talk to us kids when we played ‘murder on the corner’ and played sandlot baseball with the kids at Sherman School, and ice skated at Sherman Park in winter and saw fireworks there in summers. We walked everywhere. I have my grandmother’s wheeled cart that she took to the grocery store, Lose’s on 54th and Burleigh.