

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Honey Creek Pkwy; S-W. Wells St;

E-N. Hawley Rd; W-N. 60<sup>th</sup> St

# WEST SIDE *Valley Forge*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Valley Forge is a residential neighborhood of about five square blocks that sits between the Menomonee River on the north and Wells Street on the south. The houses are mainly Tudor style brick and stone, with a few mid-20th century wood frame units.

There is some green space at the south end of the neighborhood on the steep banks of the Menomonee River. See Valley Forge photos below.

## HISTORY

Valley Forge is a very small community that is just west of the large Story Hill neighborhood. Many of Valley Forge's settlers were spill overs from their prestigious neighbor.

### Early populations

In the early 20th century, Story Hill was becoming a haven for upper middle class families. Just east of Story Hill, on Wisconsin Avenue (then Grand Avenue), some of Milwaukee's most affluent families (such as Pabst and Cudahy) had built mansions. While the residents that settled in Story Hill were not quite this prosperous, the area did attract families of prestige, such as the Nordbergs. A great number of newcomers were socially mobile Irish from the nearby Merrill Park neighborhood, who sought housing upgrades.

Story Hill attracted a number of settlers after 1911 and continued to develop rapidly until building came to a halt during the Great Depression and World War II. In 1928, one year before the onset of the Depression, the territory just west of Story Hill started to experience change. As settlers began to build homes in the area that would become Valley Forge, two of its streets took on new names. First, its northernmost street was

named Trenton to commemorate the Battle of Trenton where George Washington's rebels defeated England's troops in the Revolutionary War. The battle took place in 1776 at Trenton, New Jersey. Second, the Revolutionary War was also on the minds of some city officials when they renamed the central drive of the neighborhood. The short, hilly street had been called Menomonee Drive until 1928 when it was renamed Valley Forge after Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where George Washington's revolutionaries survived the bitter winters of 1777 and 1778. Lacking food and clothing, Valley Forge memorialized the Patriots' victory over the cold.

By 1935, at the height of the Great Depression, there were only three homes on Valley Forge Drive.

Numbers picked up after the end of World War II, and in 1949, there were nine homes on the drive. The street attracted an eclectic group of white collar and professional settlers, including Germans, Irish, Welsh, a Bohemian, and a Syrian (see below).

Today's neighborhood-  
Valley Forge Dr. looking west



## Valley Forge random residents (1940s)

*Names selected randomly from the 1949 City Directory in the Valley Forge area  
(photo and other information found in public records on Ancestry.com)*

### Fred and Ethel Saddy

Fred and Ethel Saddy lived at 5815 Valley Forge Drive in 1949. The address was no doubt a destination move for the couple.

Frederick Joseph Saddy was born in Syria in 1896 (some records list his place of birth as Turkey). He arrived in America at age 8 with his parents and became a naturalized citizen in 1924. Despite his immigrant status and only completing the

8th grade in school, he had a successful career. By 1930 he was the Physical Director of the Eagles Club and by 1940 he was a staff member of the Boxing Commission.

Ethel Dorothy Saddy (nee Pinnell) was born in Illinois in 1899, the daughter of a Welsh immigrant father. After completing two years of high school, she took a job selling cosmetics in a department store. The couple lived on State Street in the 1920s. Fred and

Ethel had a daughter, Shirley Ann Saddy, who was born in 1936, when the parents were in their late 30s. Shirley Ann married a man named Braeger and the two moved to the far northwest side.



The Valley Forge neighborhood gradually filled in until the number of homes reached 100 and number of residents reached approximately 200. It never developed a commercial corridor.

### Current populations (as of 2021)

Valley Forge's population distribution has not changed significantly since the 1940s. The neighborhood has slightly over 200 residents, and over 8 in 10 of these are European Americans. Of these, nearly half claim German ancestry and many others claim Irish and Polish descent. There is still a Middle Eastern family in the neighborhood (Palestinian). The remaining few residents include a scattering of African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and people of multiple backgrounds.

The neighborhood still has a significant upper middle-class population, with approximately 1 in 4 people living in households with annual incomes between \$75,000 and \$150,000. Approximately 60 percent of the property units in Valley Forge are owned, rather than rented. Select monthly costs for homes (e.g., mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, insurance, taxes) go for \$1,001 to \$2,000. Most rental units cost \$501 to \$1,000 a month.

Valley Forge is a highly educated neighborhood. Over half of the residents over the age of 25 hold bachelor's or graduate degrees. The most common occupations in the neighborhood are in the fields of administration, management, and business.

## 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.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS GAMES			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Apr. to late Sep., see website for times	American Family Field. 1 Brewers Way	Major league baseball games.	Prices vary

ECO ART WEDNESDAYS			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Weds., 4-5:30pm	Menomonee Valley 3700 W. Pierce	Children work on nature-inspired recycled arts and crafts. Take home own creation every week! Register at Urban Ecology website.	unk

EARLY MORNING BIRDWALK			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Most Tue.'s. 8-10am	Menomonee Valley, 3700 W. Pierce St.	A walk for bird watchers of all ability levels to explore Three Bridges Park for birds. Register at Urban Ecology website.	Free, need to register

SLEDDING THE SLOPES OF MENOMONEE VALLEY			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jan. Tue. 4-6pm	Menomonee Valley, 3700 W. Pierce St.	An evening of snow and sledding in Three Bridges Park with hot chocolate (if there is no snow, will hike Three Bridges Park). Register at Urban Ecology website.	Free

FAMILY HIKE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mar. & Apr, Nov, Tue.'s 4-6pm	Menomonee Valley, 3700 W. Pierce St.	Guided hike to see changes in seasons through Three Bridges Park. Register at Urban Ecology website.	Free

SHAKESPEARE IN THREE BRIDGES PARK			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Jul., Fri. 7pm	Menomonee Valley behind Palermo Villa next to 33rd Ct.	Play performed by Summit Players along river in the park.	Free, but donations welcome

## FRIENDS OF HANK AARON STATE TRAIL 5K RUN/WALK

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Aug., Sat. 7- 8:15am	Start and finish near Klement's Sausage Haus (on the east end of American Family Field)	Opportunity to walk or run in race on Hank Aaron trail, or be a spectator—entertainment and food available. (Requires registration to participate)	Free (to watch)

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 the Valley Forge neighborhood and would like to make an interesting observation about the area, please send your quote to [JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)*

### PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Valley Forge Dr. looking west



Today's neighborhood-  
57th St & Trenton Pl. looking south



Today's neighborhood-Valley Forge Dr. looking east



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on 59th St. & Valley Forge Dr.



Today's neighborhood-Valley Forge Dr. at 60th St looking north to the Menomonee River

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



[www.urban-anthropology.org](http://www.urban-anthropology.org)