

Approximate boundaries:

N-W. Morgan Ave; **S**-W. Howard Ave;
E-S. 68th St, **W**-S. 76th St

SOUTHWEST SIDE *Wedgewood Park*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Wedgewood Park is a residential neighborhood with moderate population density that has mainly ranch and Colonial-style houses from the late 20th century. This neighborhood has no full commercial corridor--just a few businesses along South 76th Street.

Wedgewood Park's topography is chiefly flat to gently rolling hills. Most of the streets are wide and curving. Honey Creek Drive is a spacious boulevard that follows the curve of the creek in the northeastern corner of the neighborhood. There is green space on the sloping banks of Honey Creek. The other significant green space in the neighborhood is Wedgewood Park, a six-acre-commons with a tot lot and a wading pool. The park is located in the very center of the neighborhood. See photos below.



HISTORY

The neighborhood of Wedgewood Park is named after its park of the same name. At the time that the first homes were built in the Wedgewood Park 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 Irish, Italians, and English in the Wedgewood Park area. By 1957, only about half of the roads currently in the neighborhood had been constructed. That year Wedgewood Park had just over 100 residences, but nearly one-third were vacant or under construction, demonstrating the developing nature of this neighborhood at mid-century.

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

Wedgewood Park resident (1950s)

*Name selected from the 1957 City Directory in the Wedgewood Park area
(additional information was found in U.S. Census and other public records)*

Stanley Joseph Potrykus

Sometime in the 1950s, Stanley Potrykus, Jr. moved to 7213 West Honey Creek Drive in the Wedgewood Park neighborhood. He had just returned from service in the Korean War and probably took advantage of a Veterans Administration home loan program to purchase the house.

Born Stanislaus Joseph Potrykus, Jr. in 1930 in Wisconsin, he was the grandson of Polish immigrants, Joseph Potrykus and Josephine Potrykus (nee Plecka). His parents were Stanley J. Potrykus, Sr. and Emilia Potrykus (nee Banasiak). Stan Jr.'s parents had lived among other Poles in the Lincoln Village neighborhood before marrying—Stan Sr. on Garden Street (today's South 5th Place) and Emilia on 1st Avenue (today's 6th Street). They got to know each other, married and moved a little southeast to Bay View. Stan Sr. started out as a laborer in a stockyard and ended up an office manager for a private firm. In 1940, Stan Sr. was working full time and reported earning \$3,750 annually—about triple the annual median wages for the times. However, Stan Sr. died in 1943, at the young age of 41— cause unknown. Emilia remarried a man named Fred Schnell.

Stan Jr. had been an only child. With good family income, he was able to attend and graduate from Marquette University High School. *See his 1948 class photograph.* Shortly after graduating from Marquette, Stan Jr. joined the Army and fought in the Korean War. And very soon after returning from service, he purchased his home on Honey Creek Drive.

However, Stan did not marry for some time. He first married in 1980, at age 50, to Karen Ann Haber, age 37. Records suggest he may have moved from the Wedgewood Park neighborhood at the time of his marriage and was living in Waukesha County. He died in 1999 in Muskego at age 68.



Having developed late in Milwaukee history, the Wedgewood Park neighborhood never established a commercial corridor. In 1957, the neighborhood had only one business.

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 Wedgewood Park.

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.

Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, the small Wedgewood Park neighborhood has just over 1,500 residents. Of these, nearly 9 in 10 are European Americans (over half claiming German or Polish ancestry). Approximately 1 in 20 are Latinos (most with Mexican ancestry and the rest with Puerto Rican, South, and Central American ancestry). There is also a scattering of African Americans, American Indians, Asians (nearly all of Indian and Pakistani descent) and people of multiple racial backgrounds.

The median household income in Wedgewood Park is just over \$62,000, placing the neighborhood in the middle-income stratum. The occupations cited most often by adult residents are in the fields of administration, production, and education. Just under one-quarter of the Wedgewood Park residents work in local government, a very high proportion for Milwaukeeans.

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

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



Today's neighborhood—Houses on S. Massachusetts Ave. & W. Georgia Ave.

Today's neighborhood-
Houses on S. 75th St.



Today's neighborhood-South Honey Creek Dr.



Today's neighborhood-
South Honey Creek Dr.
& W. Wedgwood Ave.



Today's neighborhood-Wedgewood Park

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