

**Approximate boundaries:**  
N-W. Cleveland Ave; S-W. Oklahoma Ave;  
E-S. 51<sup>st</sup> St, W-S. 68<sup>th</sup> St

# SOUTHWEST SIDE *White Manor*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

White Manor is a moderately populated neighborhood with mainly 1950s ranch and Cape Cod style houses. Most of the streets are wide and winding with a few that end in *cul de sacs*. The business corridors are along South 60th Street and West Oklahoma Avenue.

White Manor has gently rolling hills throughout the neighborhood and areas of public green space. These include a small playground directly behind El Rey Mexican Products (along West Stack Drive) and the steep, sloping banks of the Kinnickinnic River—a waterway that flows through the northwestern part of the neighborhood. See photos below.

## HISTORY

The White Manor neighborhood was once located in the unincorporated Town of Greenfield with borders of Greenfield Avenue on the north, College on the south, 27th Street on the east, and 124th on the west. Early on, the neighborhood was known as the White Manor Park Subdivision.

### Early populations

Early signs of European settlement in the area appeared just east of today's White Manor neighborhood when pioneer farmers (mostly Germans) settled along Forest Home Avenue in the middle to late 1800s. Forest Home at the time was the Janesville Plank Road, serving as a well-traveled toll road that was the only link between the developing city and the country. By the late 1800s a scattering of mainly Poles and some Germans from the Old/Historic South Side

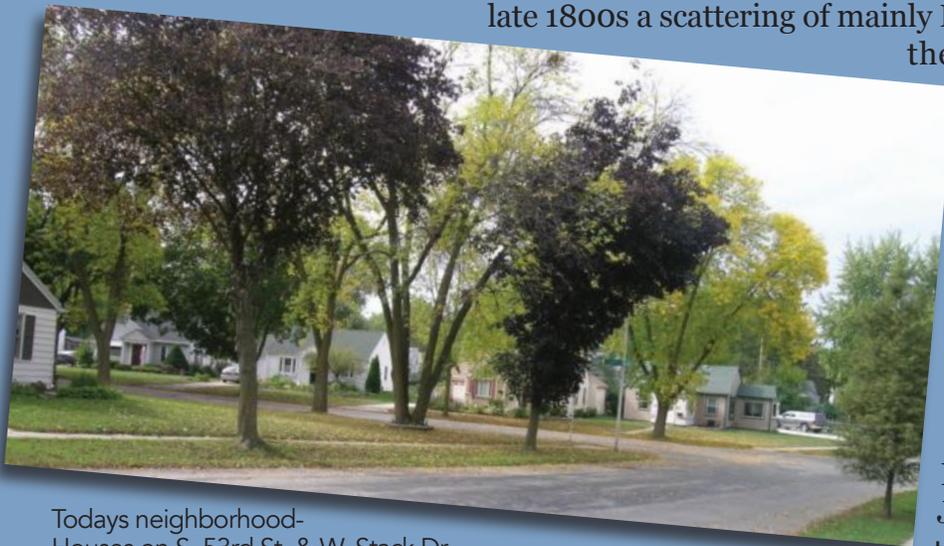
began to migrate west and south and purchase land around Forest Home Avenue.

Perhaps seeing the area as a future Milwaukee neighborhood, the city Park Commission purchased the northern half of a nearby farm to preserve forested space in 1907 and named it Jackson Park for President Andrew Jackson. Soon the area around the park began to fill up with

migrating families, and the Jackson

Park neighborhood on White Manor's eastern border emerged. As Jackson Park filled up, residents began to migrate west into today's Fairview and White Manor neighborhoods. The City of Milwaukee annexed the area encompassing the three neighborhoods between 1927 and the late 1950s.

The White Manor area was only sparsely populated when the Great Depression began. In the 1930s the region had only a handful of settlers. In 1939, the White Manor Park Subdivision was opened to home-seekers.



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on S. 53rd St. & W. Stack Dr.

## Post World War II

White Manor was very late in developing any business corridors. While South 60th Street is a busy one today, this was not the case early in White Manor's history. Below is a list of businesses on South 60th in 1947 within the neighborhood's boundaries. A block north of the two lonesome businesses was a riding stable located on a farm. All reflect the rural nature of the area in the middle of the 20th century.

<i>Addresses on S. 60th in 1947</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2848	Jacob Beehelm Garden Market
2929	Charles Kroupa Carpenter

This was a time when returning vets from World War II needed housing. The need was so great that Milwaukee County erected 50 tiny Wingfoot houses (see example to right) made of plywood walls just a few blocks east of the White Manor neighborhood, at the site of today's Manitoba Park at 49th and Manitoba. The houses remained at that site well into the 1950s.

Of the White Manor addresses listed in the 1955 City Directory, approximately 1 in 10 were listed as under construction. New settlers were arriving every day. Included among them were families from Greece, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Austria, and Yugoslavia (mostly Serbs, some Croatians).

Businesses were still slow to develop. Below is a familiar story on South 60th Street in White Manor in 1955.



<i>Addresses on S. 60th in 1955</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
2708	Russell Shenners Building Contractor
2817	Matthew F. Burazin Mason Contractor
2900	John A. Zach Building Contractor
2038	Apartments

**Summary and notes from U.S. census and other records:**

- As the businesses in 1947 reflected the rural nature of Fairview, the businesses in 1955 reflected a neighborhood under fast development.
- Russell Shenners, the building contractor, had worked for a sewer construction firm before opening his own business.
- Matthew F. Burazin, the mason contractor, was an immigrant from Yugoslavia. He had worked as a laborer for another construction company before opening his business.
- John A. Zach, the building contractor, started his business while still in his 20s. He was the son of German immigrants.

There were a few more businesses on West Oklahoma in 1955.

<i>Addresses on W. Oklahoma in 1955</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from the Milwaukee City Directory</i>
5101	American Serb Memorial Hall
5329	Oklahoma Avenue Lutheran Church
5507	Frank C. Micale Mason Contractor
5600	Engine Co. No. 10 / Truck Co. No. 17
5601	Gilbert H. Schmidt Grocer
5701	White Manor Tap Tavern
5810	Mary's Sandwich Shop (Mary Basack)
5811	Penguin Drive-In Confectionary
6000	Harold Schultz Barber

**Summary and notes from U.S. census and other records:**

- Serb Hall, serving Milwaukee's Serbian community and Milwaukeeans generally, opened in 1950.
- Oklahoma Avenue Lutheran Church was built by the earliest settlers to the White Manor area in 1932.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school and most were immigrants or children of immigrants.
- Frank C. Micale, the mason contractor, was typical of proprietors of his time. He had completed the 8th grade and was the son of immigrants from Italy. He had served in World War II

- Harold Schultz, the barber, was an anomaly on the street in that he'd spent a year in college. He was, however, the son of German immigrants.
- Gilbert H. Schmidt, the grocer, was a machinist before opening his store. Typical of other merchants of the time, he had completed 8th grade and was the grandson of German immigrants.
- Mary's Sandwich Shop was owned by Mary Basack. See a profile of her and her family below.

### **White Manor merchant (1950s)**

*(Information was found in U.S. Census and other public records)*

#### **The Basacks**

In 1955, Mary Basack operated a sandwich shop at 5810 West Oklahoma in today's White Manor neighborhood. She and her husband, George Basack, were Croatian immigrants from Yugoslavia. George emigrated in 1912 when he was 28. A short time after his arrival in the United States, he married Mary who was 14 years his junior. It is not known where they first settled, but by 1933 the couple was living on South 60th Street and Arthur, three blocks north of White Manor's northern border. At the time they had a teenage son Charles and a 5-year-old daughter, D. Violet. The family spoke Croatian at home. Both Mary and George were naturalized and became citizens— George in 1927 and Mary in 1940.

Like the several building contractors listed above and probably like many of his neighbors, George worked as a carpenter in the building trade. Even though home building had slowed considerably during the Great Depression, this was not the case with the White Manor area, where the White Manor Park Subdivision had opened in 1939.

After her children had left home, Mary opened her sandwich shop on West Oklahoma. One can only speculate what kind of Croatian traditions she may have incorporated into her restaurant. For example, the sandwiches may have been made from pita bread, or to keep them looking more typically American, she may have made them from pogaca, a thick, crusty farmers' bread popular in her home country (see photo<sup>ii</sup>).

Records suggest that the Basacks may have moved to California sometime after the closing of the restaurant. They eventually retired in Hartford, Wisconsin where George died in 1974 and Mary in 1976.



Within two decades a neighborhood that had welcomed diverse Europeans would also begin to attract other populations.

#### *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 spread all over the South Side, including White Manor.

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 the 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. While many Puerto Ricans settled on the North Side, other Latinos from the Caribbean and Central and South America followed the Mexican migration.

### Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, White Manor has just over 1,700 residents. Of these, over half still claim Polish or German ancestry. Nearly 7 in 10 residents claim some kind of European American descent. Approximately 1 in 6 are Latinos (most of Mexican ancestry) and approximately 1 in 15 are African Americans. There is also a scattering of Asians (mostly of Chinese and Filipino descent), Arabs, and mixed-race residents.

The median household income in White Manor is just over \$47,000, placing the neighborhood on the cusp between the lower middle and middle-income strata. It is also a well-educated neighborhood with nearly 4 in 10 of the residents holding bachelor’s or graduate degrees. The occupations cited most often by adult residents are in the fields of administration, production, and sales. Over twice the number of residents are in the fields of computers/math and health tech than their proportions in other Milwaukee areas.

### 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.

WINTER FEST AT JACKSON PARK			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Dec., Sat. 11am-3 pm	Jackson Park, 3500 W. Forest Home Ave.	Face-painting, cocoa, crafts for kids, music, and more.	Free

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--JACKSON			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4 8am-10pm	Jackson Park, 3500 W. Forest Home Ave.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, free ice cream, fireworks.	Free

### JACKSON PARK FARMERS MARKET

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun. thru early Sep., Thu. 3:30-7pm	3300 W. Forest Home Ave.	Fresh food from Wisconsin farms, baked goods, crafts, art.	Free

### AUGUST NIGHTS CONCERTS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Aug., Thu's, 6:30-8:30pm	Jackson Park, 3500 W. Forest Home (Picnic Area #2)	Concerts in park.	Free

### MOVIES AT SOUTHGATE CINEMA

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Daily	3320 S. 30th St.	Popular movies at a Marcus Theater.	unk

### ST. RITA PARISH FESTIVAL—WEST ALLIS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jul., Fri. 7-11pm, Sat. 7-11pm, Sun. 11am-5pm	6021 W. Lincoln Ave., West Allis	Festival of live music, special dinner each day, and more.	Free

### SLEDDING--MCCARTY

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Winter, daytime	McCarty Park, 8214 W. Cleveland Ave.	Sledding hills for family and friends.	Free

### OUTDOOR ICE SKATING—WEST ALLIS

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Winter, only when ice is 6 inches thick	McCarty Park, 8214 W. Cleveland Ave.	Ice skating for adults and children (heed "thin ice" signs).	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 White Manor and have an interesting observation to make about your neighborhood, please send your quote to [JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)

# PHOTOS

Today's neighborhood-Houses on S. 53rd St.



Today's neighborhood-Playground on S. 53rd St..



Today's neighborhood-El Rey Mexican Products.

Today's neighborhood-Houses on 58th & Montana



Today's neighborhood-Kinnickinnic River from a footbridge looking north



Today's neighborhood-Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School



Today's neighborhood-Houses on 57th & W. Stack Dr.

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)

<sup>1</sup> Photo attribution: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/91/Goodyear-Wingfoot\\_House-1943-2.JPG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/91/Goodyear-Wingfoot_House-1943-2.JPG)

<sup>11</sup> Photo attribution: Başak - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/basak/232841833>