

Approximate boundaries:

N-E. Ogden Ave; **S**-E. State St;

E-N. Lincoln Memorial Dr; **W**-N. Jackson St

DOWNTOWN *Yankee Hill*

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Yankee Hill is picturesque. Most of the buildings in the Yankee Hill neighborhood were built before 1930. The mansions and the churches were designed in the Gothic, Italianate, and Greek Revival styles. The neighborhood's topography is flat and interspersed with gently rolling and steeper hills.

The neighborhood has significant green space in and near the Burns Commons square and at Juneau Park on Lake Michigan. See photos below.

HISTORY

Located at the northern tip of the downtown area, Yankee Hill was one of the earliest neighborhoods to develop in Milwaukee.

Early populations

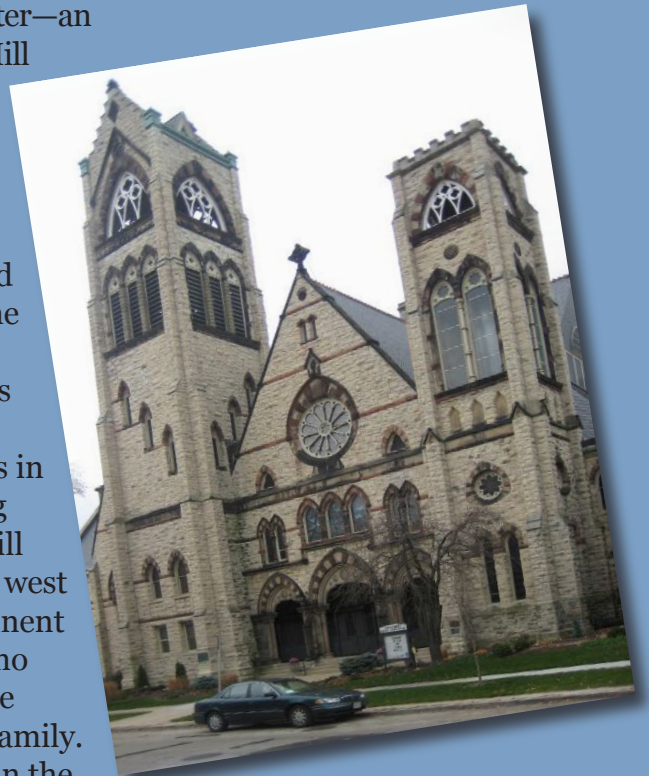
The neighborhood's early settlers are what make Yankee Hill unique. John Gurda, in *Milwaukee, City of Neighborhoods* (p.6) describes them well.

Although they were a minority in their own city as early as 1850, the Yankees had come to Milwaukee in the very first wave of white settlement, and they had a virtual lock on wholesale and retail commerce, the grain trade, the professions, and local politics. These Easterners were the frontier elite, and the most successful of them built sumptuous Italianate, Gothic, and Greek Revival homes on the high ground northeast of the business quarter—an area known appropriately as Yankee Hill

They also built Protestant churches. Some of the majestic Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches still stand in the neighborhood today. See photos below.

By the mid-1800s, the Yankees were surrounded by Germans and Irish in the downtown area. And by the middle of the 20th century, the neighborhood became home to Italians, Scots, French, Austrians, and Jews, as well as Germans, Irish, and Anglo Saxons.

Among Yankee Hill's most prominent ancestors in the early years of the 20th century, was the Annenberg family. Their family home still stands in the Yankee Hill neighborhood on North Marshall, in a building on the west side of the street just north of East Wells. Other prominent ancestors with Yankee Hill ties were the McArthurs who once had a home on North Marshall. Yet another of the neighborhood's prominent ancestors was the Carson family. They also made a home on North Marshall sometime in the 1930s. See the resident profiles on the following pages.



Today's neighborhood-
Immanuel Presbyterian Church

Yankee Hill family profile (early 1900s)

(Information and photo from public records at Ancestry.com and other public records)

The Annenbergs

In many ways, the Annenbergs were a family of opposites. Moses Annenberg (b. 1877) was the son of a Jewish Orthodox immigrant from East Prussia. Growing up on the tough streets of South Chicago, Moses found a path into the Hearst Corporation as a circulation manager. Although he married a devoutly Jewish woman, Sadie Cecelia (nee Freeman), Moses seemed to have ambivalence over his religion.

Just after the turn of the century, Moses moved to Milwaukee and the Yankee Hill neighborhood to run the circulation department of the *Wisconsin News*. Having homes and offices both on Van Buren and Marshall, Moses soon began his own publishing and development business, M. L. A. Investment Co. of Milwaukee. He amassed a fortune quickly. His firm helped develop some of Milwaukee's landmark sites, including the Oriental Theater building. As the publisher of *Daily Racing Form*, Moses took an avid interest in racetrack gambling and overtly cooperated with organized crime and the Mafia. He eventually served time in prison for tax evasion.

Despite his own vices, Moses sought respectability for his children. In Milwaukee, he involved his family in German cultural life, even sending his sons to the German-English Academy (now the University School of Milwaukee), where they studied German language and customs. At home, the family surrendered kugel and latkes for schnitzel and Usinger's mortadella bologna.

Moses Annenberg sent son Walter to a Baptist-run college-prep institution, Peddie School in Hightstown, New Jersey, where Moses believed Walter would acquire discipline and respectability. In many ways, Walter matured to be very much the opposite of his father. He moved his father's publishing interests into wholesome mainstream media, such as *Seventeen* and *TV Guide*. He also took an immediate interest in public service and philanthropy. He became one of the founding trustees of Eisenhower Fellowships and was appointed by President Nixon as ambassador to the Court of St. James's in the United Kingdom. As a philanthropist, he gave persistently to Jewish causes, including a \$15 million gift to Operation Exodus in 1990 to bring Russian Jews to Israel.

Walter Annenberg lived much of his adult life in New York and California. He married twice—first to Bernice Veronica Dunkelman and second to Leonore "Lee" Cohn. He had two children with Bernice. Among the honors bestowed upon Walter Annenberg for public service during his lifetime were the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1986 (see him with President Reagan to the right¹) and the Eisenhower Medal for Leadership and Service in 1988. He died in 2002.



Spotlight on West Town family (early 1900s)

(Information found on public records at Ancestry.com)

The MacArthurs

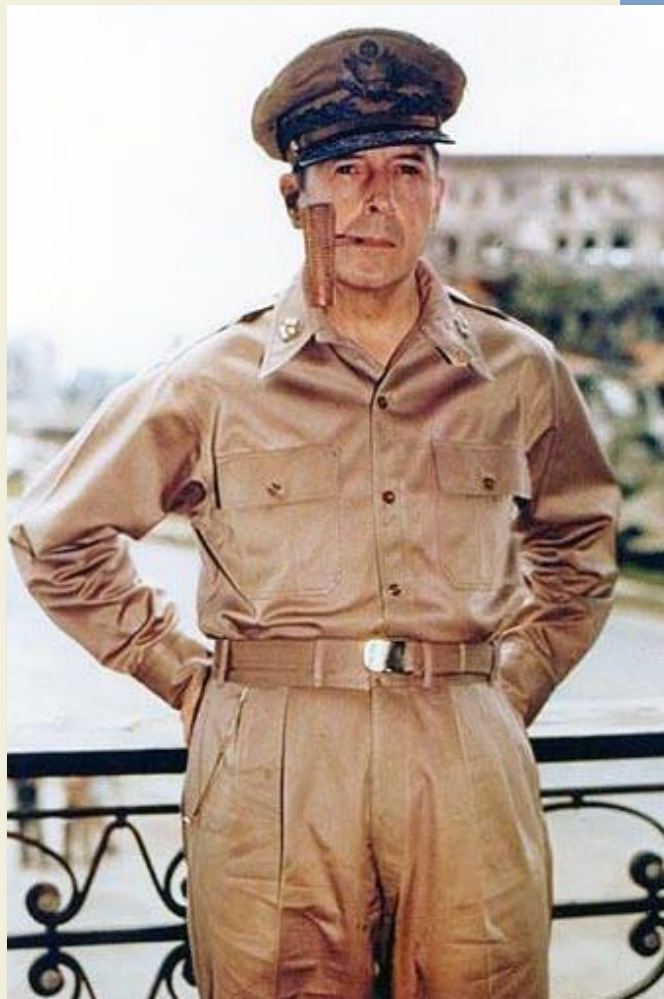
Three generations of the famed MacArthur family had deep Milwaukee roots with connections specifically to the West Town and Yankee Hill neighborhoods.

Arthur MacArthur Sr. was a Scottish immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1815. He and his family first settled in Massachusetts where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. McArthur married Aurelia Belcher and the family moved to Milwaukee. McArthur set up a law office in the 1st Ward, where he quickly rose to political importance. In 1851 he was elected City Attorney. In 1856 he served four days as Governor of Wisconsin, during a time of political upheaval. He later served a full term as Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, then two terms as judge of the 2nd Wisconsin Circuit Court, and by 1870 was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia by Ulysses S. Grant.

His oldest son, Arthur MacArthur Jr., born in 1845, set his sights on the military. He served in the Civil War and received the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery at the battle of Missionary Ridge. Arthur Jr. rose to the position of full colonel and made the military his lifelong career. Married to Mary Pickney Hardy, he advanced to the position of Military Governor in the Philippines. In 1909, he retired from the military and the family returned to Milwaukee, where he rented a house on Marshall Street in the Yankee Hill neighborhood. In 1910, he and Mary were living comfortably with two servants and were also being looked after by third son Douglas, who himself was building a decorated career in the military. Arthur Jr. died in 1912.

Douglas MacArthur (see rightⁱⁱ), was born in 1880, while his father was stationed in Arkansas. He had spent time in Milwaukee prior to attending to his father. He lived for a time at Milwaukee's Plankinton Hotel in today's West Town neighborhood, while he was studying for the entrance exam to West Point. A marker there today acknowledges the tenure of MacArthur at the hotel.

Graduating at the top of his West Point class, Douglas went on to become army chief of staff in 1930 and commanding general of the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East during World War II. He was also a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service in the Philippines Campaign. He retired from duty in 1951 and died in 1964. He was married to Louise Cromwell Brooks and later to Jean Faircloth.



Yankee Hill Profile (early 20th century)

(Information from census and other public records)

Jack Carson

Born in Carman, Manitoba, Canada in 1910, John Elmer (“Jack”) Carson moved to Milwaukee with his family before he reached the age of 9. While his father, Elmer L. Carson, was a Canadian citizen, his mother, Eleanor (“Elsie”) Carson (nee Brunke-Jungnik) was a native of Appleton, Wisconsin. Jack had a brother Robert who was two years older. Father Elmer Carson developed a successful career as an agency manager, possibly for an insurance company. In 1940, Elmer reported his annual income as “\$5,000+,” which was more than four times the annual median for the times.

The Carson family lived on Prospect Avenue during Jack’s childhood. While the exact location of their Prospect home is unknown, Jack attended Hartford School (today’s Hartford University School) in the Downer Woods neighborhood. Jack later enrolled at the exclusive St. John’s Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin. Following graduation from St. John’s, Jack attended Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. It was at Carleton that Jack first envisioned a career in the performing arts. Playing a role in the production of *Hercules*, Jack tripped on stage and took half the set with him. A college friend, Dave Willock, thought it was so funny that he talked Jack into teaming up with him for a vaudeville act.

While Jack was beginning his career, the Carsons moved the family home to 1030 North Marshall in the Yankee Hill neighborhood. At the time, father Elmer had an office at the Wisconsin National Bank Building on Water Street.

Jack Carson began his career with Dave Willock in a vaudeville act. By the mid-1930s the public was losing interest in vaudeville and Jack and Dave looked for work in radio and the movies. In 1938, the team made an appearance on the *Kraft Music Hall* when Bing Crosby hosted the radio show. The opportunity was a breakthrough for Jack and he began to get bit parts in films. Gradually the parts grew and he landed the role of scheming Wally Fay opposite Joan Crawford in *Mildred Pierce*. While he made scores of movies, some of his most acclaimed roles included the part of Harold Pierson opposite Rosalind Russell in *Toughly Speaking*, publicist Matt Libby opposite Judy Garland in *A Star is Born*, and “Gooper” with Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (see photoⁱⁱⁱ).



Jack brought his family to Hollywood by the mid-1940s and may have helped brother Robert get some of his film roles. During his California days, Jack married four times and was also linked romantically with Doris Day. At the early age 51 he was diagnosed with stomach cancer and died at 52.

Ogden Avenue

Ogden became Yankee Hill's main business corridor. The following chart lists the businesses, organizations, and offices on Ogden Avenue in 1940, during the height of the Great Depression. See summary and notes below.

<i>Addresses on E. Ogden in 1940</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
600 (at Jackson, moving toward the Lake)	John Ernst Restaurant
601	Luick Ice Cream Company, Manufacturers Wisconsin Creameries Inc. Ice Cream Manufacturers Luick Dairy Company
608	New Deal Fruit Market
612	New Deal Inc. Groceries
616	Post Office Sub Station #15
618	Ogden Food Market Leo Calandich Meats
621	Henry A. Koster Tavern
622	Gartzke Brothers Hardware
624-30	Layfayette Apartments
625	Edwin O. Schmitt Plumber
626	Gertenbach Grocery Market
628	Kenneth Gertenbach Meats
632	Silber Drug Company
633	Ignazio Castagna Radios
700	Foth's Texaco Service
703	Auto Shock Absorber & Brake Service Automotive Repair
709	Albany Apartments
712	Penhurst Apartments
714	H.E. Pengelly X-Ray Company
715	Mary O'Reilly Interior Decorator
719	Hulda Huther, Nurse
728	Irving H. Fowle Physician
808	A & P Food Stores
812	Thomas Theoharis Shoe Repair
816	Ogden Theater

<i>Addresses on E. Ogden in 1940</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
820	Cullen Apartments
830	Office Building Eugen Cleary Physician Salvatore J. Avellone Dentist Henrietta M. Werlein Nurse
832	Ogden Drug Shop
911	First Baptist Church
912	Almare Apartments
917	Ogden Hosierie & Loungerie [sic] Shoppe
918	William Phillips Furniture Rooms
919	Ogden Waffle Shop
923	George F. Ayers Barber
925	Schmidler's Market
927	Sattler's Food Market
929	Ogden Pastry Shop Bakery
931-33	Ogden Cigar & Liquor Store
1018	Sorolla Apartments
1024	La Poloma Apartments
1051	Hanson Motor Sales Inc.
1108	Thill Brothers Plumbers (Edwin Thill)
1116	Charles A. Boelter Garage
1116A	LeRoi Tailors & Cleaners
1117	Anderson Apartment Garage
1121	Ogden Beauty Salon
1124	Ogden Shoe Repair Shop
1125	East Shore Cleaners & Shoe Repair
1126	Leo F. Bragen Groceries
1127	Lee's Coffee Pot #2 Restaurant
1129	Lee's Tavern
1130	Ogden Barber Shop

<i>Addresses on E. Ogden in 1940</i>	<i>Names of businesses and organizations from Milwaukee City Directory</i>
1131	Thomas D. Bullwinkel Grocery
1132	Apartments
1135	Sanders Drug Store

Notes from census and other public records:

- In 1940, Yankee Hill had most of its needs met with the shops on Ogden, including a supermarket, small grocers, a bakery, a butcher, healthcare providers, barbers, pharmacies, and even a theater.
- As in most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school.
- The John Ernst Café was once an iconic German restaurant. Established in 1878 at 200 E. Ogden as a Schlitz saloon, Ogden Café, and Mother Heiser's, it became the John Ernst Café when Ernst bought it in 1939. It closed in 2001.
- The fact that two shops have "New Deal" in their names reflects the times and Roosevelt's programs.
- The Ogden Theater stayed in operation for decades after 1940.
- Henry A. Koster, with the tavern, had been in business at that spot since before 1920. His father was an immigrant from Alsace-Lorraine and his mother was an immigrant from Austria.
- Kenneth Gertenbach, the butcher, was a grandson of German immigrants who had settled in Iowa. Kenneth had only completed the 4th grade in school.
- Ignazio Castagna, with the radio shop, was an Italian immigrant. His shop was originally a music store (probably selling sheet music or instruments) but became a radio store in the late 1930s. He had completed the 5th grade.
- Hulda Huther, the nurse, was the daughter of German immigrants. She lived at the same address as her office. She apparently never married. She had completed high school, but had no post-secondary education.
- George Ayers, the barber, rented an apartment in Shorewood in 1940. He had completed the 8th grade.
- The LeRoi Tailor Shop may have been owned by Antonio LeRoi, an Italian immigrant. He was a servant living on Cass Street in 1930.
- Charles A. Boelter, with the garage, had nearly always lived in or around the Yankee Hill neighborhood. He lived on Ogden in his early twenties and on Astor in his teens. Of probable German extraction, he had completed high school.
- Thomas Bullwinkel, the grocer, was the descendant of German immigrants. He had completed the 8th grade.
- Leo F. Bragen/Bregan, the grocer, was a German immigrant. He'd completed the 8th grade.

Current populations (as of 2021)

There are just under 3,000 residents living in Yankee Hill today. The neighborhood population is young. Over 50 percent of its residents are between 20 and 34 and most of these are college students and young professionals. Over four-fifths of the population is European American and the second largest group is Asian (due sometimes to the draw of Milwaukee School of Engineering in the area). Over 7 in 10 Asian residents have ancestry in India. Approximately 8 in 10 residents over 25 have bachelor's or graduate degrees, a very high proportion for Milwaukee. The neighborhood also has over twice the proportion of residents engaged in legal professions, science, and math/

computers than Milwaukee generally.

Eighty percent of the properties in Yankee Hill are rented, as opposed to being owner occupied. Many of the mansions left behind by the early Yankee population have been subdivided into up-scale apartments. But despite the beauty of the buildings, rents are relatedly low, with over half going for \$501 to \$1,000 a month.

INTERESTING NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

- **The Astor**, at 920 E. Juneau, a hotel with apartments.
- **The Knickerbocker on the Lake**, at 1028 E. Juneau, a hotel with condominiums.
- **Metro Mart**, at 1123 N. Van Buren, a supermarket with a deli that attracts people from all over Milwaukee.
- **Juneau Park**, on Lake Michigan, with its statues of Solomon Juneau and Leif Erickson
- **Burns Commons**, at N. Prospect and E. Knapp, a sculpture garden and walkway.
- **St. Joan Antida**, at 1341 N. Cass, a Catholic high school.
- **Lincoln Center for the Arts**, at 820 E. Knapp, a school for creative students (see photo).

QUOTE FROM RESIDENT

“This is a walking neighborhood—not just for me but for all its residents. You’ve got all the old mansions dating back to the time when Milwaukee was just developing. You have two lovely hotels. You’ve got the very popular Metro Mart that draws people from all over the city. And you have Juneau Park. There’s much history to explore here and much that is new to also enjoy.”

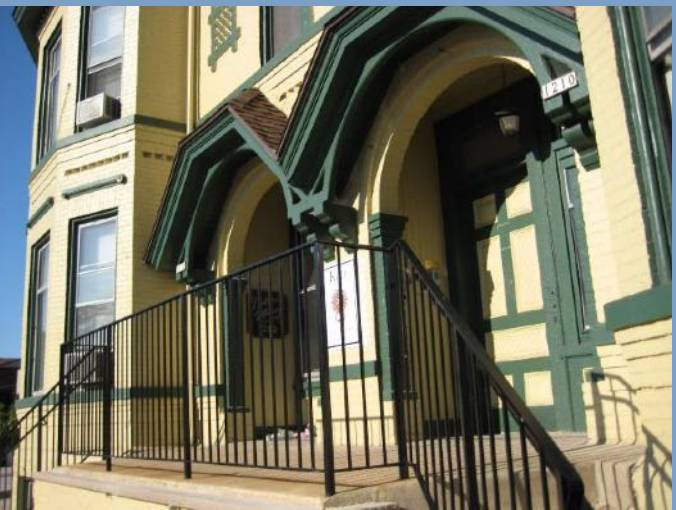
--Anonymous

If you are a resident of Yankee Hill and have an interesting observation about this neighborhood, send your quote to JFLanthropologist@currently.com

PHOTOS



Today's neighborhood-Ballroom at the Astor Hotel



Today's neighborhood-Historic mansion converted to apartments

Today's neighborhood-Statue of Solomon Juneau
at Juneau Park



Today's neighborhood-Cathedral Church of All Saints (square)



Today's neighborhood-Lincoln Center for the Arts (school)



Today's neighborhood-Italianate house corner of Cass St and Juneau

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*.

ⁱ Photo attribution: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Annenbergs_with_Ronald_Reagan_1981_cropped.jpg

ⁱⁱ Photo attribution: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/92/MacArthur_Manila.jpg

ⁱⁱⁱ Photo attribution: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/70/Cat_on_a_Hot_Tin_Roof16.jpg



Today's neighborhood-Burns Commons walking square

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 Dr. Jill Florence Lackey at: jflanthropologist@currently.com



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