

**Approximate boundaries:**  
**N**-E. Holt Ave; **S**-E. Howard Ave;  
**E**-S. Howell Ave; **W**-S. 6<sup>th</sup> St

# SOUTH SIDE *Saveland Park*

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Saveland Park is a densely populated neighborhood. Its topography is flat with gently rolling hills. The main home architectural style is Tudor but there are a few areas with 1950s to 1970s ranch-style houses south of Holt Avenue. Almost all the streets in Saveland Park follow a rectangular grid pattern. The two residential streets the furthest west (5th Street and 5th Place) are entirely cut off from the rest of the neighborhood by the I-94 freeway.

Neighborhood business corridors are along Holt and Chase Avenues with a few businesses on Howard. There is a park in the neighborhood, also named Saveland, which is 3 acres in size, with a tot lot/play area, lagoon, and a wading pool.

## HISTORY

Saveland Park is one far south side neighborhood among many that makes up today's Garden District. The boundaries of the Garden District are those of the 13th Aldermanic District. All Garden District neighborhoods were once part of the unincorporated Town of Lake, with boundaries of Lake Michigan to South 27th Street and Greenfield to College Avenues. By the mid-1950s, the City of Milwaukee had annexed the areas that today encompass the Garden District.

### Early populations

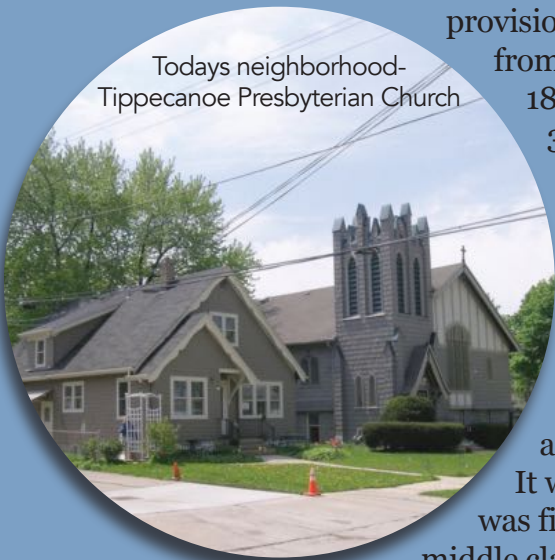
Many of the far south side neighborhoods that comprise today's Garden District owe a debt to the dreams of a local Norwegian named John Saveland (after whom Saveland Park got its name).

Saveland owned a booming business on Water Street that provided provisions for fishing boats, steamships, and schooners that sailed from Milwaukee. And he also had an interest in real estate. In 1887 Saveland organized a group of investors that purchased 30 acres of land bordered by today's Bradley, Howard, Whitnall, and Howell. The group hoped to attract upper middle class home buyers to their project— people who would work in the city and retire to their county estates at the end of the work day.

But despite a convenient Milwaukee streetcar with stops along Howell Avenue, few lots were sold in the early days. Saveland ultimately turned some of the land into a recreational venture, with an amusement hall and grounds. It wasn't until the time of Saveland's death in 1909 that the area was finally beginning to attract settlers. These were not the upper middle class professionals that Saveland had expected, but south side working class people—mostly Poles.

Housing was reaching the far south side in the early 20th century. It wasn't until the end of World War II that the housing market really began to take off and new and improved streets emerged. Newly arriving settlers were migrating from Near South Side and Historic South Side neighborhoods. By 1949 all of the Saveland Park area had been annexed by the City of Milwaukee, and the neighborhood had just under 300 residences.

Today's neighborhood-  
Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church



Most of the settlers were Polish and German, but with a scattering of English, Austrians, Irish, and Italians. See the randomly selected resident profile below.

### **Random resident--Saveland Park (1940s)**

*Resident randomly selected from 1949 Milwaukee City Directory.  
(Information and photo from public records at [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com))*

#### **Melvin Joseph Petri**

Sometime in the 1940s, Melvin Petri, his wife Helen (nee Scott), and children left their rented home on 34th and Oklahoma in the Southgate neighborhood and moved to South Chase on the boundary of today's Saveland Park neighborhood. The descendant of German immigrants, Petri grew up on a farm in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin that had been in his family for several generations.

Melvin Petri struggled after leaving the farm. Having only completed the 8th grade in elementary school, he faced the Great Depression job market after moving to Milwaukee. He took jobs as an auto mechanic and roofer after marrying Helen. The family first lived in Bay View on Kansas Avenue. Census records from 1940 indicate that Helen's mother, Margaret Scott, was living with the Petris. She may have always lived with the couple, as Helen's father, Orin Scott, a farmer and carpenter, had died in 1927. In 1940, the Petri's annual income was \$1,200, low even when compared to the Great Depression median. Perhaps for that reason, the family also took in two lodgers while living in the Southgate neighborhood.

Melvin died in 1966, at the young age of 58--cause unknown. He was buried in St. Francis, where Helen's father was also interred. Helen died in 1983 and was also buried in St. Francis.



In 1949, the Saveland Park neighborhood had fewer than 10 businesses. Most of these were on West Howard. See list below.

<i>Addresses on Howard Ave. in Saveland Park area in 1949</i>	<i>Name of business or organization from the <a href="https://www.ancestry.com">Milwaukee City Directory</a></i>
111	Frank Podriznik Tavern
116	Grebe's Bakery
118	Ja Layne Beauty Shop
120	Tippecanoe Feed Store
333	Thomas Hapka Grocery Store

Addresses on Howard Ave. in Saveland Park area in 1949	Name of business or organization from the Milwaukee City Directory
427	Dominic Banach Grocery
433	Anthony B. Paczkowski Grocery

#### Notes:

- Technically, only those businesses on the north side of Howard Avenue (even street numbers) were within today's Saveland Park boundaries.
- The presence of a feed store demonstrates how rural the area still was in 1949.
- Like most Milwaukee neighborhoods prior to 1970, few shopkeepers had attended high school
- Frank Podrizkik, with the tavern, was an immigrant from Austria.
- Thomas Hapka had operated the grocery store at that location since the 1930s. Before that, his father John, a Polish immigrant, had operated it.
- Dominic Banach was the son of immigrants from Russia and Germany. He had married at a young age and worked as a milkman before opening his store.

Saveland Park area development would increase in the next decade. By the mid-1960s there were thousands of small ranch houses and Cape Cods extending to and beyond the Saveland Park neighborhood. The population would gradually become more diverse for two reasons. First, Milwaukee Latinos continued migrating south from the Near South Side in the 1970s and 1980s. Second, the founding of the Islamic Center of Milwaukee in 1982 attracted Muslims from the Middle East and northern Africa.

#### Current populations (as of 2021)

Today, small Saveland Park has just over 1,500 residents. Nearly 8 in 10 are European Americans (most still of German and Polish ancestry), and just under 2 in 10 are Latinos (mostly Mexican, but including quite a few Puerto Ricans). There is also a scattering of Asians (almost all Asian Indian), African Americans, and people of multiple backgrounds in the area. While there are almost no Middle Eastern or northern African residents in Saveland, there are hundreds in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The median household income in Saveland Park is just over \$60,000 a year, placing the neighborhood in the middle-income stratum. The largest number of occupations claimed by residents are in the fields of administration, sales, production, education, and food service. Over four times as many residents are in the fields of math/computers, over two times as many in repair fields.

Gardening is a major hobby among Saveland Park residents—a tradition carried over from the time when the neighborhood was part of the unincorporated Town of Lake. In 2008, the Common Council approved a resolution to name all the neighborhoods in the 13th Aldermanic District the *Garden District* of the City of Milwaukee, capitalizing on a long tradition of gardening

among residents and businesses. At the time, Alderman Witkowski said, “Residents and businesses here have worked hard to solidify this identity. We have had perennial exchanges and gatherings, lectures by noted gardeners, and even awarded area businesses landscaping awards to encourage and foster the character of our area.” The idea for the Garden District grew from discussions between the alderman and residents about the interest in and tradition of gardening and landscaping within the district. The effort began in earnest in early 2007, when a group of individuals formalized a garden committee and met regularly to create a vision for the 13th Aldermanic District that focused on gardening and landscaping to beautify and improve quality-of-life.

## 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.

GARDEN DISTRICT FARMERS MARKET			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Early Jun. through mid Oct., Sat.'s 1-5pm	Just south of Howard on 6th St.	Market of fresh vegetables and other vendors.	Free

GARDEN DISTRICT CRAFT FAIR			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Apr., Sat. 9am-3pm	3333 S. Howell	Fair of over 25 vendors, concessions, prizes, bake sale, and more.	unk

JULY 4TH CELEBRATION--WILSON			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
July 4, 9am-10pm	Wilson Park, 1601 W. Howard Ave.	Parade, Doll Buggy, Bike & Trike, and Coaster judging, music, games, fireworks.	Free

GLOW SKATE			
When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Dec., Fri. 7:30-9pm	Wilson Park Arena, 4001 S 20th St.	Skating, glow-in-the-dark necklaces, holiday lights, music, prize drawings and a gourmet hot-chocolate bar (skate rentals available).	unk

### ST. ROMAN'S ANNUAL FESTIVAL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Jun., Thu. 6-11pm, Fri. 6-11pm, Sat. 2- 11pm, Sun. 12-9pm	1710 W. Bolivar Ave.	Festival of continuous music, food, rides, raffle, other cash prizes, and more.	Free

### LATINO FAMILY EXPO & FESTIVAL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Late Oct., Sat. 12-6pm	Augustine Prep Academy, 2607 S. 5th St.	A Health, Education, and Employment Fair to honor Latinos/as, featuring social services, entertainment, immigration counseling, trick or treats, consumer products, and more.	Free

### UMOS MEXICAN DAY FESTIVAL

When?	Where?	Description and contact info	Admission
Mid Sep., Sun. 12-8pm	UMOS Center, 2701 S. Chase Ave.	Festival of food vendors, beer, live music, craft vendors, everything Mexican.	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 an ongoing oral history of the Garden District by Urban Anthropology Inc.<sup>1</sup>—about THEN

“I lived near Layton in the 1970s. What I recall fondly was that little Saveland Park. On my days off, my kids and I would cycle to the park where they had a small wading pool. It was, I think, the one thing my kids looked forward to more than anything else in their young lives. There I would meet up with so many of my neighbors and my kids’ friends. I think I finished about 25 Agatha Christie novels while I watched the kids, because they would never want to leave.”

“When I moved in the area around 11th and Oklahoma there was a lot of German and Polish, mostly white people. There were no Hispanic or African American families there. Now thirty years later there’s a lot of middle-aged Hispanic families that moved south of Oklahoma and a spattering of African American families. But the makeup south of Oklahoma, they still keep up their yards and take pride in their homes.”



“The majority of the District gets developed in the ‘50s and the ‘60s because South 27th expands south. Ranch houses, Cape Cods, etc. expand south, so probably by the end of the ‘60s most of what is in the Garden District was built. Over half of it didn’t exist at the point where I moved in. All this area that was annexed during the ‘50s. We pretty much doubled the city in size during the 1950s. Generations have passed through since then and I’m now seeing renewal. We didn’t see that back then because we were relatively new and stable and you didn’t see redevelopment of an area.”

### **Quotes from an ongoing oral history of the Garden District by Urban Anthropology Inc.—about NOW**

“Well, the touches we put on the streets, for example, with the landscaping, security in the area. Crime went down 40 percent in the area, which is something amazing. People were like, ‘Are you serious?’ And it happened between neighbors and business and the neighborhood associations. The area is now clean, safe. People ask me what I love about Milwaukee and I say ‘green, clean, and friendly people.’”

“You can afford to marry and raise a family in the Garden District. Bay View is getting very pricey. Saveland Park and Wilson Park are places where people convene and play, with the hockey rink, pool, etc. That is probably the largest area for community fun.”

“We call us the Gateway to Milwaukee because if you tell someone outside you live in Shorewood, they will ask ‘what?’ But if you say Milwaukee, they get it. It points to the whole of Wisconsin.”

“In my earlier years in the ‘80s to early ‘90s it was predominantly Caucasian, German and Polish, and currently in the last 10 years, again, we’ve added a lot more Hispanic, some Hmong, and some African American, and still have some of the older Germans and Poles.”

“I think what I do worry about now is the fact that we’ve had so many city workers in the District—police, fire-fighters, etc. And now they don’t legally have to stay in the City of Milwaukee and we are already seeing some move out. Some went into Cudahy, I believe. I hope this does not continue.”

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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-  
Saveland Park



Today's neighborhood-  
Houses on 5th Pl.



Today's neighborhood-  
5th Pl. and Saveland Ave.





Today's neighborhood-Saveland Park lagoon (turtles in the foreground)

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)



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