



# Milwaukee Neighborhood Forum

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*Milwaukee Neighborhood Forum* is a bimonthly newsletter that highlights assets, history, events, and resources for and about Milwaukee neighborhoods. Residents and neighborhood organizations are encouraged to submit press releases on their events and successful programs. See back page for details.

## The enormous losses Milwaukee suffered during urban renewal

Between 2000 and 2012, Urban Anthropology Inc. conducted a comprehensive study of Milwaukee ethnic groups, covering 65 groups. During those years and beyond, the organization has also conducted oral histories of Milwaukee neighborhoods, covering over 100 to date. In all, over 1,000 informants have been interviewed in depth. Questions were standard but responses were at times surprising. When informants were asked about Milwaukee policies that affected neighborhoods or ethnic groups, the policies cited most often were urban renewal and freeway building in the mid-1900s that razed entire neighborhoods, many of them ethnic. The discussions were overwhelmingly critical. Most bemoaned the loss of strong organic communities that were forced from their neighborhoods when miles of blocks were bulldozed.

### Where responsibility lies

The bulk of urban renewal and freeway building took place under two Milwaukee mayors, Frank Zeidler and Henry Maier. While responsibility for freeway building was transferred from the city

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## *Lost neighborhoods—what our city residents had to say*

Jill Florence Lackey, PhD

To date, over 1,000 informants have participated in Urban Anthropology's Milwaukee studies. As the principal investigator in charge of the neighborhood and ethnic oral histories for 21-plus years, I have read and analyzed every transcript at one time or another. One salient theme that resonates in the findings is the sense of loss experienced by residents whose communities were razed by urban renewal and freeway building in the 1950s and 1960s.

This was especially true for the ethnic neighborhoods, which included the fully bulldozed African American Bronzeville, the Italian Third Ward, Little Puerto Rico, and the partially bulldozed Irish Merrill Park and Polish Lincoln Village/Baran Park.

### *In their own words*

#### **"It made no sense"**

Many informants discussed their sense of disbelief in razing entire communities rather than just rehabbing older homes.

*"It made no sense. Most of the homes needed just a little work. They could have spent their money there and not broken up the community. But urban renewal took out everything. The culture, the community."*

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## URBAN RENEWAL LOSSES (continued)

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to Milwaukee County's Expressway Commission in late 1953, the massive system of highways that displaced many Milwaukee neighborhoods was initially championed by Mayor Zeidler. Both mayors assumed the responsibility for implementing urban renewal, but in different ways.

Urban renewal projects were made possible with the passage of Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 giving federal aid for slum clearance to eliminate blight. Local governments could now receive funds to raze slum areas and rebuild them in any way they deemed appropriate. But in response to criticism that the federally funded projects displaced and disrupted entire communities, the U.S. government passed the Housing Act of 1954, which now gave money for conservation as well as rehabilitation projects. Thus, there were two tracts: (1) redevelopment—total site demolition with cleared properties sold to private and public companies, and (2) conservation—improvements to areas to prevent blight and slow decline of aging neighborhoods.

Beginning in 1955, Milwaukee initiated a series of urban renewal projects under Mayor Frank Zeidler. Zeidler was the city's third Socialist mayor, having served from 1948 to 1960. Much good had been accomplished for the working class under Milwaukee Socialist mayors, including the development of the Garden Homes neighborhood (see story later in this issue). But urban renewal was not one of the better efforts. All of the renewal projects were designed using the redevelopment tract. Areas judged to be slums would be razed and, under the plan, residents might eventually access future public housing at sites dispersed across the city.

When Zeidler declined to run for office again in 1960, Henry Maier tossed his hat in the ring and was elected mayor. Almost all of the urban renewal projects completed during his terms were inherited from Zeidler. However, Maier slowed the evolution of slum removal, drawing the frequently reported wrath of Frank Zeidler. In a *Milwaukee Sentinel* article on October 4, 1962, Zeidler accused Maier of placing more emphasis on conservation and rehabilitation than on complete demolition. Frank Zeidler is quoted as saying "there is no substitute for slum clearance," arguing for total blight removal and re-planning of the areas. Maier claimed he preferred aid to property owners to rehabilitate their homes.

Even though the razing of older areas gradually slowed under Maier, Milwaukee lost part or all of many older but close-knit neighborhoods. Among the ethnic neighborhoods completely razed were Little Italy, Little Puerto Rico, and African American Bronzeville. Among the ethnic neighborhoods *partially* razed by freeways were Polish Lincoln Village/Baran Park and Irish Merrill Park. Two of the larger removal projects are underscored below.

### Little Italy and the "Little Pink Church"

The Lower Third Ward project was the first urban renewal program begun under Mayor Frank Zeidler. The Third Ward area charted for demolition was home to first, second, and third generation Italians from Sicily. They had moved into an area vacated by the Irish following the great Third Ward fire of 1892. The Italians built a strong ethnic community in the Ward. By 1920 the neighborhood had 2 spaghetti factories, 45 grocers, a Festa Ital



iana, and Commission Row where fruit and vegetable wholesalers hawked their wares at the curbsides of grocers and restaurants. Notably, the Italians had built the Blessed Virgin of Pompeii on Jackson Street. Labeled "The Little Pink Church" because of the pink-painted bricks, the house of worship was the spiritual heart of the Third Ward Italians.



Historic marker of Blessed Virgin of Pompeii

Most of the buildings in the Ward were past their prime by the 1950s. When the Zeidler administration made this the city's first redevelopment project and the news of area demolition was passed on to the community, the response was fierce. Willard Downing, Executive Director of the Milwaukee Redevelopment Authority, an agency responsible for implementing the project, later wrote about the reaction in a 1960 article in *The Milwaukee Journal*. He described how spiritual leaders, residents, and business owners fought the condemnation. Two public hearings were held: the first lasted 7pm to midnight, the second lasted 7pm to 2am. Property owners and

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## URBAN RENEWAL LOSSES (continued)

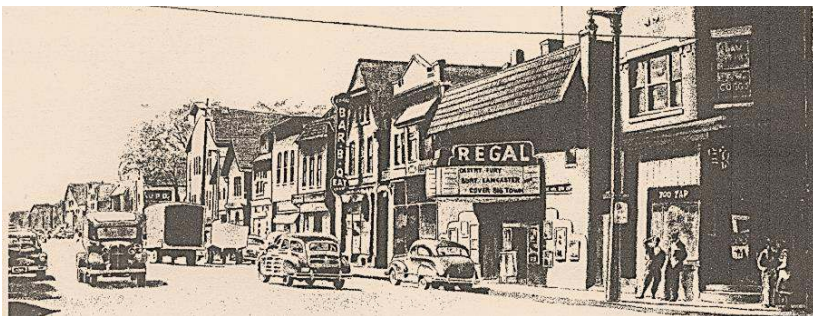
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cultural leaders argued that the demolition would destroy their community. Battles continued until bulldozing began in 1957.

Ultimately, over 200 buildings were condemned and the community was forced to find homes elsewhere, returning only on Sundays for services at the “Little Pink Church.” The population of the Third Ward dropped from 2,402 in 1950 to 258 in 1960. The construction of the I-794 freeway completed the demolition in 1967 when the Blessed Virgin of Pompeii was also bulldozed.

Physical traces of the once thriving Italian community remain in the neighborhood. In 1977 a historic marker of the Blessed Virgin of Pompeii was erected by Pompeii Men’s Club and the City of Milwaukee at the church’s original location, now at the intersection of the Van Buren Street Exit 1E Ramp of I-794 and Jackson Street. Milwaukeeans have also gestured to bring “little Italy” back to the Third Ward. When the Italians of Southeastern Wisconsin decided to build a community center, they erected the 60,000 square foot Italian Community Center back in their old neighborhood on East Chicago Street. When Commission Row finally closed, an indoor, upscale version of the former market was built in 2005 on North Water at the northern boundary of the Historic Third Ward—today called the Milwaukee Public Market.

### **Bronzeville: Razing of 8,000 homes**



Charcoal drawing of Old Walnut Street by area artist, the late Sylvester Sims

The losses experienced by the Italians of the Third Ward were modest compared to the losses experienced by the African Americans of Bronzeville. The combination of clearances from urban renewal and freeway building cost this community over 8,000 homes and nearly all of its business district.

The once thriving community of Bronzeville built up during the Great Migration. Centered on Walnut Street, the area included today’s neighborhoods of Halyard Park, Hillside, Haymarket, and a section of Triangle North. When African Americans began arriving in large waves to Milwaukee between 1930 and 1960, a combination of factors worked to turn an already aging area into a ghetto. These factors included restrictive agreements where deeds stipulated who could and could not purchase the property, redlining in the private housing market, laws where municipalities zoned industrial areas that surrounded black neighborhoods to keep blacks contained in those areas, and the refusal of financial institutions to approve mortgage loans for African Americans. Almost none of the buildings were owned by blacks.

The appearance of the Bronzeville area had declined by 1950, but the community itself was spirited. African American Bronzeville had its own grocery stores, churches, drug stores,

rec centers, hotel, newspapers, funeral home, nightclubs, restaurants, and social clubs of 10 to 15 members each that sponsored their own weekend entertainment and donated to local causes. By 1959 Bronzeville had 160 religious, fraternal, and social organizations. The nightclubs featured celebrated entertainers such as Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and Louie Armstrong and attracted crowds of white as well as black patrons. The slogan of a popular restaurant, Larry’s Chicken Shack on Walnut, echoed the spirit of the area: “If you live and play in Bronzeville it is a joy and pride, and Larry’s luncheonette is the best in southern fried.”

Two urban renewal ventures, the Hillside Neighborhood Redevelopment project and Haymarket Square Redevelopment project, began during Frank Zeidler’s administration and continued during Henry Maier’s. With the promise of public housing in the future, the community did not initially react to the first signs of slum removal in the late 1950s. But when the urban renewal efforts and construction of two major freeway corridors removed nearly all of the community’s business district on Walnut Street, and threatened to take out more neighborhoods, residents united in opposition. Under the leadership of James Richardson, residents formed an improvement club in 1960 to remove signs of blight at the western edge of the razed area in hopes of blockading further demolition. They built and attached flower boxes to homes, organized clean-ups, and pressured absentee landlords to rehab their buildings by sending photos of the landlords’ own homes and those they turned into rental properties in Bronzeville to newspapers.

By 1965 the improvement group had developed into a formal organization, the Walnut Improvement Council—or WAICO. The organization moved with authority, promising to empower residents to wrench them from the hands of city planners. WAICO raised \$515,000 for paint and supplies to improve the area, recruited architects to help rebuild the community, and attracted celebrities to champion the cause. By 1969 all threats of additional bulldozing disappeared.

However, residents who had lost their homes and much of their once cohesive community never forgot. The Walnut Street Social Club Reunion was formed and meets every year in Carver Park to recall the old days. Today a coalition of African American activists partnering with the City of Milwaukee is working to rebuild Bronzeville. Their vision is the creation of a new commercial and entertainment district that will mirror the area’s past. A number of installments are already in place.



**AND 2020 IS ONLY HALF OVER**

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS (continued)

*Continued from Page 1*

*“So many [Puerto Ricans] didn’t know that we could get paid to move. I don’t who was putting out the information, but I personally don’t know of anyone that got money. We just had to leave suddenly and leave our homes behind, and our church and our entire network of friends. . . My family eventually rented in Riverwest. But it took years to make the adjustments. Now we got Club 99 and guys playing dominoes like in the old neighborhood. But there was no reason why we had to make the move. They could have probably spent less money by fixing up the older homes.”*

*“And they knocked down the Pompeii church. . . Nothing really impacted us as much as that, except for when the city came in and condemned all of the houses. They condemned all of our houses, and we had to move out. We had an all brick home, and we had to move out of it, because it was condemned, because the city said it was, and there was nothing we could do about it.”*

*“That damn freeway took out a third of Merrill Park. These were the cheap houses where the low-income residents lived—some poorer Irish and blacks. Many worked for the railroad yards but when they lost their cheap housing—which by the way—wasn’t really bad housing, then the quality of their lives was lost too.”*



### **“The breakdown of the village”**

Some informants discussed how the razing of neighborhoods cost residents the cohesive cultural practices that had developed organically in their communities over the generations.

*“The loss of Bronzeville was the breakdown of the village. The whites had people moving them into the projects and those [African Americans] with a little money moved to the suburbs. It was then the image of who we were that came from the whites. Before that it had been a localized culture. Before that you took care of your own—you watched other people’s kids, made sure your neighborhood was nice and safe. After the move, we lost that.”*

*“No policy that I can think of had much effect in my neighborhood, but I’d say there was [a policy effect] in the Third Ward.*

*We came there to see the Italian processions and the festivals. No one could believe it when the city said they were going to condemn this neighborhood.”*

*“There was a time when we were all one parish [Basilica of St. Josaphat]. We were all one neighborhood from the cemetery [Forest Home] into Bay View. But when that blasted freeway came, it split us in two. From that point on there was this disconnect in the neighborhood, which I think exists to this day.”*

### **“They wanted to just get rid of them”**

Informants pointed out how both urban renewal and freeway construction had strongest impacts on the most vulnerable communities.

*“Oh, they didn’t know too much about what was going to happen and then they found out. And what that did was—they removed 8,000 homes. They wanted to just get rid of them [African Americans]. And they didn’t care about the people who lived there, just wanted to make it look better, you know. That didn’t change the conditions, you know. . . It was callous.”*

*“It was the first urban renewal project the city undertook, and they were well intentioned, but they didn’t realize the devastation it brought to the community. . . I know in Boston they wouldn’t let them do it, and they are so happy they didn’t do it. The North End is a real significant part of Boston [today].”*

*“It took so long before people started saying, ‘Say, what happened there? Why did they do that? But I say, ‘You watch out, because it can happen again. All you need is someone that just likes his power.’”*

### *Jane Jacobs on cities*

*“Cities, like anything else, succeed by making the most of their assets. Dull, inert cities, it is true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But lively, diverse, and intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry for problems and needs outside themselves.”*

*From *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.*

# How to learn about your neighborhood while the family's shut in

## STORIES FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH

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The Kids Across Time and Space (KATS) program is a fulfilling way for families to spend a day learning about a number of Milwaukee neighborhoods. The website provides youth-friendly stories about select areas of the city, recipes that are indigenous to the cultural groups of these neighborhoods, and games and art projects to entertain while enhancing learning about the neighborhoods.

Go to [http://teacheraidsforkidsmilwaukee.com/KaTS\\_main.html](http://teacheraidsforkidsmilwaukee.com/KaTS_main.html) and click on any of the orange rows for the following stories.

### Bronzeville to Sherman Park

**RUBY'S LOST CHILDHOOD.** A fictionalized account of an African American girl living in Milwaukee, the loss of her Bronzeville community, her migration to and from Milwaukee, her movement into the Civil Rights Movement and local fair housing marches, and her struggles to keep her new home in Sherman Park.



### Lincoln Village

**STEFAN'S GOOSE.** A fictionalized account of a young Polish boy living on Milwaukee's south side in the early 1940s, his daily life in a Polish flat, his faith community at the Basilica of St. Josaphat, and what he learned one month about how his meals were prepared.

### Downtown Area

**BEVERLY, THE FIRST "MATERIAL GIRL."** A story of a girl living in Milwaukee in the prosperous 1950s and how she and her age mates were influenced by the growing material culture of the day. A story about the influences of popular culture on gender roles.

### Third Ward

**PATRICK'S DREAM.** A fictionalized account of a young Irish boy whose family settled in the Third Ward in the late 1800s, his aspirations to become a fireman, the scorn he faced from friends for setting his hopes too low, and his ultimate redemption when a fireman from the Ward saves the city of Milwaukee from burning down.



There are nearly 50 other stories about ethnic groups in historical settings on this site, all complete with recipes, notes, games, and art projects.

## 191 MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOODS

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For shut-ins to simply learn about specific neighborhoods, this is a very comprehensive site. <http://neighborhoodsinmilwaukee.org/>

One-hundred and ninety-one Milwaukee neighborhoods are on this site. The project was created from the oral histories conducted by anthropologists at Urban Anthropology Inc., covering over 100 of these neighborhoods. The following details are provided about each of the 191:

- Brief, population-based history
- Quotes from oral history of this area

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## LEARNING ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD \_\_\_\_\_

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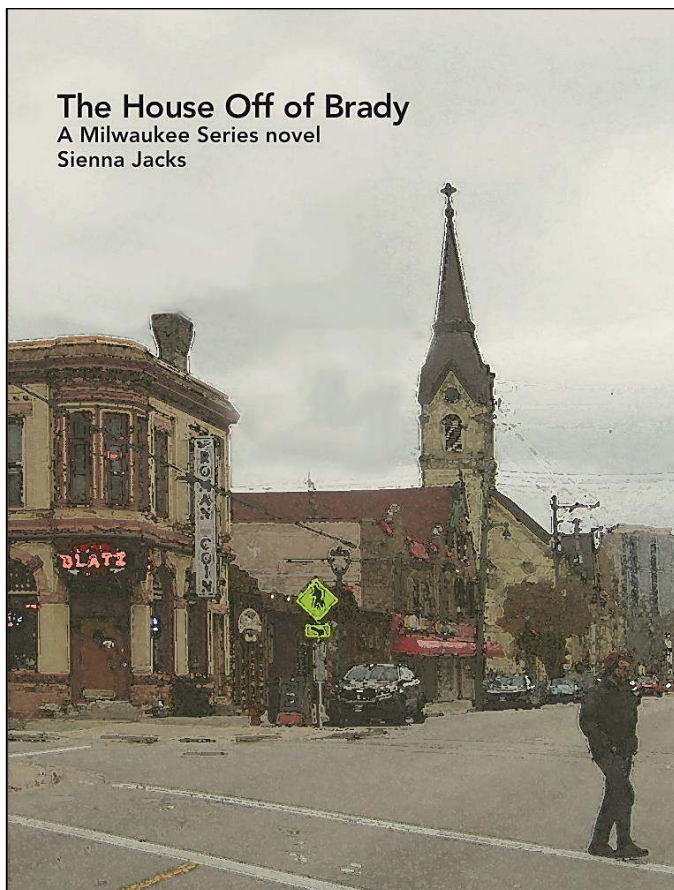
- Description of neighborhood
- Photos of neighborhood (and at times historical photos)
- List of important sites
- Recurring nearby outings
- Businesses in the history of the neighborhood
- Profiles of people who once lived there

## **MYSTERY NOVELS TAKING PLACE IN MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOODS** \_\_\_\_\_

Milwaukee native and cultural anthropologist, Sienna Jacks, has written a series of novels that take place in Milwaukee neighborhoods.

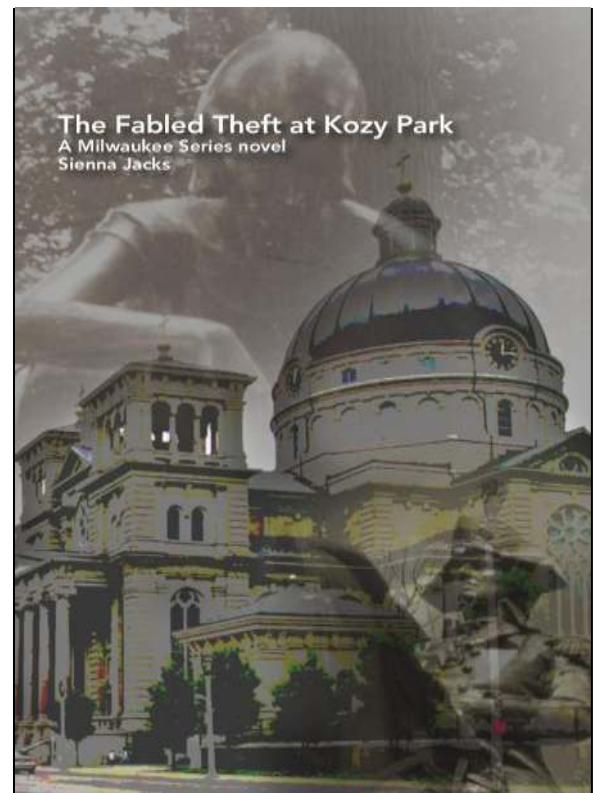
### **The House Off of Brady**

Two young anthropologists, trying to convince a local nonprofit to sponsor a neighborhood house museum, must show that the historical occupants of the house were representative of Milwaukee's Brady Street, and that they project positive images for the neighborhood. Their efforts are boosted by a personal journal left behind by one of the home's occupants--Giuseppe Russo. But as the young anthropologists translate and transcribe the journal, they learn that Giuseppe had been banished from his former community in the Third Ward. Are they about to stumble on information that could kill the project—or something perhaps even worse? Access at <http://mecamilwaukee.com>



### **The Fabled Theft at Kozy Park**

The anthropologists at City Anthropology were asked to use their research skills to look into a man's confession that might crack the longest unsolved mystery on Milwaukee's old South Side—the theft of the squirrel lady statue at Kozy Park. According to reports, the man Raf (now deceased) also implicated members of a local Polish club with an agenda of removing non-Polish influences from the neighborhood. Assigned to the project, Enid and Meyer are baffled by the information they are getting from those who witnessed the confession, little of which supports Raf's story. Further inquiry points to events surrounding Raf's stepson. Who really was he and why did he inexplicably appear on the scene all those years ago? Their quest for answers leads them to the club in question, but with unexpected results. The ultimate mystery they must solve is the true reason why Raf made this confession and steered them to a list of alleged conspirators. Access at <http://mecamilwaukee.com>



### **The Shop on King Drive**

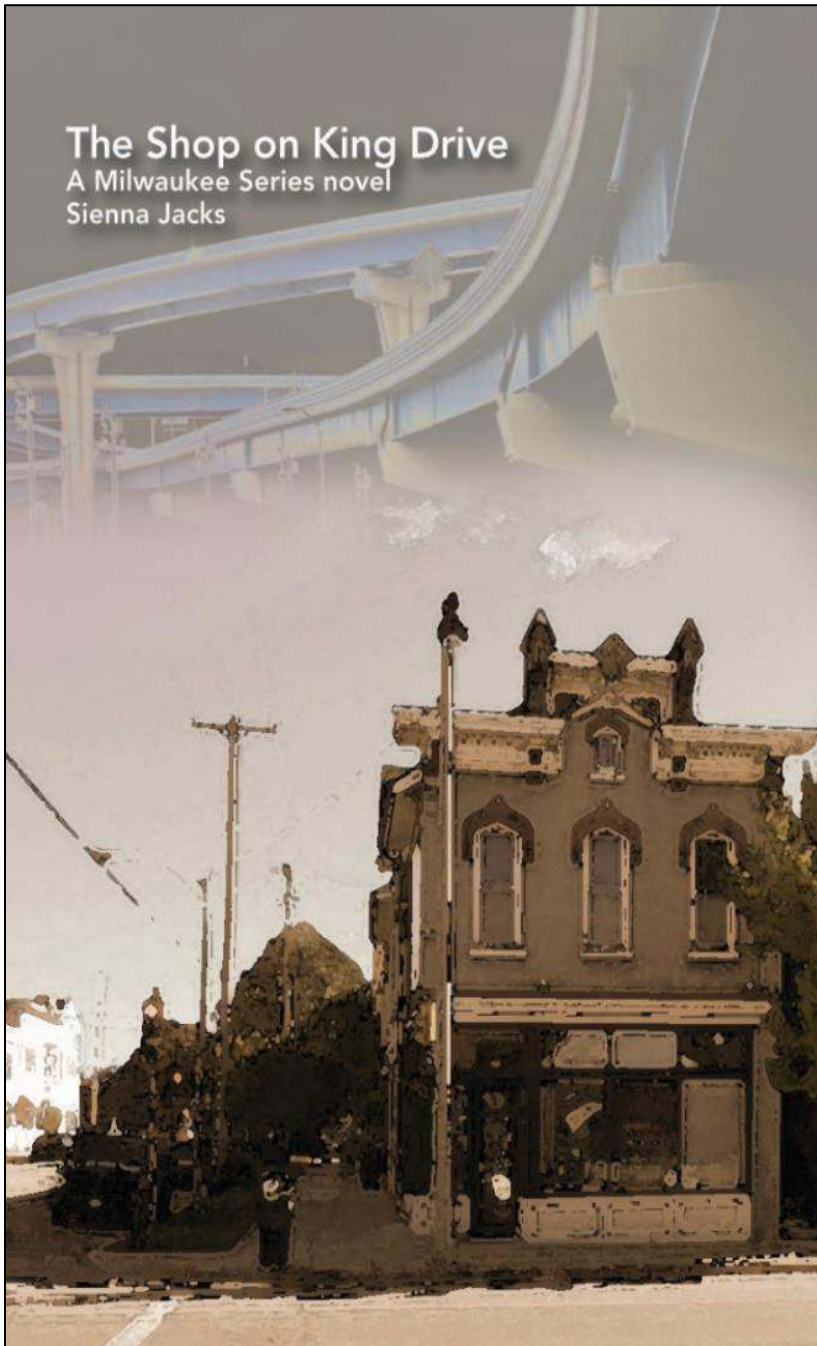
A mystery arises out of the ruins of urban renewal. Two young anthropologists, conducting research that would illuminate one dark period in Milwaukee's central city history,

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## MYSTERY NOVELS

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confront painful but sometimes puzzling accounts. During the 1950s and 1960s, over 8,000 homes and an entire business district of the African American Bronzeville community were razed. While interviewing survivors, the anthropologists note that the name of a particular attorney kept entering the conversation. The lawyer claimed to be helping the black community fight the removal, but his efforts had the opposite effect. Suspicions remained for over 50 years over who was behind the deception and why. <http://mecahmilwaukee.com>



## *Happening in the Walker's Point neighborhood*

*When the coronavirus pandemic  
has ended*

**WPCA**  
WALKERS POINT  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS



*Since 1987*

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**839 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street**

*Ongoing exhibitions and pro-  
grams in a neighborhood setting*

**Open Tuesday through Saturday,  
noon to 5pm**



# Milwaukee's Garden Homes neighborhood: A Socialist experiment



In 2021 the Historic Garden Homes District with its 100 households will be honoring its 100th anniversary!

Each edition of *Milwaukee Neighborhood Forum* will feature a story on one Milwaukee neighborhood



The original Garden Homes neighborhood was the wedge created by the intersection of West Atkinson and North Teutonia Avenues. Today the neighborhood extends west to 30<sup>th</sup> Street.

Garden Homes has a unique history. Until the 1920s, the area that is today the Historic Garden Homes District was a sparsely populated rural patch of land occupied by a few widely-spaced farms. The farm owners were nearly all Germans.

The original fan-shaped Garden Homes housing project was built in the early 1920s under Milwaukee's second socialist mayor, Daniel Hoan. The project had been championed by Milwaukee's first socialist mayor, Emil Seidel, who went on to purchase a home in the subdivision. Garden Homes was the first municipally-sponsored cooperative housing project in America—an unprecedented experiment. In city documents, Seidel is quoted as saying the following: "We do not expect to usher in the cooperative commonwealth in one or five years, but we do intend to do all our limited means permit to make Milwaukee a better place to live in."

At the time, the original Garden Homes was still surrounded by farms and undeveloped land. The wedge created by the intersection of West Atkinson and North Teutonia Avenues was made up of small homes on small lots, organized around a boulevard-like green park, which still stands today. Tree-lined streets had charming names such as "Port Sunlight" and "Hampstead."

Typical of Milwaukee's north side at the time, most of the residents were German. The neighborhood was organized along cooperative principles which meant every resident owned shares in the neighborhood. The homes were built and sold at cost to avoid making profits—the profit motive being generally unpopular with most Socialist leaders.

## Early residents of note

Among Garden Homes early residents was the already-mentioned mayor and a talk show host.



Garden Homes Park

## Emil Seidel

In 1920, Emil Seidel, his wife Lucy (nee Geissel), and daughter Viola lived at 1153 Nineteenth Street (now 2860 North 19<sup>th</sup>) in today's North Division neighborhood. At the time, the 55-year-old Emil Seidel was finishing his last term as Milwaukee alderman, ending an illustrious political career. A Socialist, he was first elected alderman in 1904. He served as mayor of Milwaukee from 1910 to 1912, becoming the first Socialist mayor of a major city in the United States. During his time as mayor, Seidel established the public works department, the first fire and police commission, and a city park system. He also succeeded in cleaning up corruption in Milwaukee, including closing brothels and "sporting parlors" (similar to today's casinos).



Emil Seidel became the vice-presidential candidate on the Socialist ticket in 1912, pairing up with Eugene Debs. The two won 901,551 votes in the 1912 presidential election, 6 percent of the total vote.

Much changed in Seidel's life between 1920 and 1930. He moved to 4431 North 25<sup>th</sup> Street in the Garden Homes neighborhood—the cooperative venture that had been established under Daniel Hoan's administration. He and wife Lucy divorced. Seidel found himself returning to his creative side from his earlier years. Born the son of Germans from Pomerania, Seidel had an artisan's background. His first interest was wood crafts. At age 13 he dropped out of school to become a woodcarver. At age 22, still fluent in German from his home, he traveled to Berlin to hone his woodcarving skills. He worked at his trade during the day and attended school at night.

It was in Berlin that he became interested in Socialism and suspended his work perfecting his

*Continued on Page 10*

## GARDEN HOMES NEIGHBORHOOD

*Continued from Page 9*

craft in exchange for a political career. However, once in the Garden Homes neighborhood, and later living with his daughter's family nearby, he revisited his esthetic interests. Until his death at age 84 in 1947, Emil Seidel passed his days composing music, painting, creating poetry, and writing his autobiography

### **Tom Snyder**

Thomas James Snyder was born in Milwaukee in 1936. He and his family lived at 4207 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street in the Garden Homes neighborhood. His parents, Frank Snyder and Marie Snyder (nee Buettner) were of German, Cornish, and Irish ancestry. Born in Vermont, father Frank Snyder worked full time as a salesman with 1940 earnings reported at \$2,080, considerably above the national average of \$1,368 for Great Depression times. Marie Snyder was a homemaker and a native of Kewaunee, Wisconsin.



Thomas Snyder, journalism senior, adjusts the lighting during a TV-Workshop session.

The family was Catholic. Tom attended Catholic schools and went on to graduate from Marquette University with a degree in Journalism (see one of his Marquette yearbook photos to the left). Tom began his work in journalism as a reporter for WRIT radio in Milwaukee. He moved to television in the 1960s and became a news anchor for stations in Cleveland, Philadelphia, and New York City—eventually doing Sunday broadcasts for *NBC Nightly News*.

Tom Snyder's career really soared when he was offered the host position of the talk show, *Tomorrow with Tom Snyder*, which aired after *The Tonight Show* from 1973 to 1982. Guests included celebrities such as John Lennon, Ayn Rand, Charles Manson, and Gene Simmons.

In the 1990s he returned to the talk show format and hosted *The*

*Late Late Show with Tom Snyder*. Some of his controversial interviews included one with Gloria Vanderbilt over her son's suicide and Robert Blake over being charged with murder.

Snyder died of complications from leukemia in 2007. He had married once to Mary Ann Bendel. The couple had a daughter.

### **Garden Homes today**

While the years have taken its toll on Garden Homes, work is being done to restore its beauty and dignity. The neighborhood was placed on the National Register of Historic places in the 1980s, but it was not declared a historic district in Milwaukee until 2013 when residents organized to avoid the razing of many homes. Historic designation sometimes creates funding possibilities, such as tax credits for home improvement. In addition, the City of Milwaukee, the Northwest Side Community Development Corporation, PNC Bank, and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority have collaborated on restoring sections of Garden Homes.

But the major work for the historic neighborhood has been accomplished by the local residents. In early Spring, 2021 the Garden Homes Neighborhood Association, Inc. will be celebrating its 50th anniversary of ongoing service and advocacy for the residents and other stakeholders of the historic district and beyond. The association is the longest

surviving, ongoing, volunteer-based community organization in the city, seeking to present the neighborhood as an "extended family" where everyone would be valued and celebrated. Proactively, the association has organized picnics and fun projects; successfully advocated for improvements in the Garden Homes Park; assisted families with issues relating to aging, illness, and unemployment; initiated neighborhood clean-ups; developed a crime prevention program; and procured better street lighting, stop signs and a one-way street.

In efforts to maintain homes, the association composed and sent a resource handbook to each property owner, and recently developed and activated a home repair rebate project. The association also underwrites a chess instruction project at the neighborhood's two elementary schools and sponsored the purchase and installation of nine speed bumps within the residential streets to slow down traffic. In 2017 the association was instrumental in getting city government to designate the area as a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID #6), which brings in a yearly stream of funds for improvement and socially uplifting projects.

Joe Bova, the president of the Garden Homes Neighborhood Association, praises the day he and his family first moved to Garden Homes. On September 1, 2020 he will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of living and raising a family in the Historic Garden Homes District.

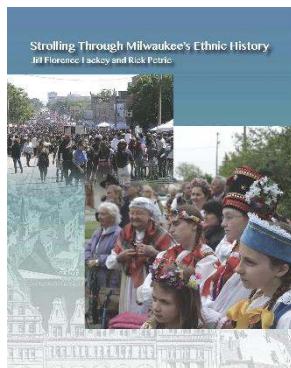
"Our moving into the neighborhood is purely by accident," Joe admits. "Back then my wife and I were looking to purchase a home in Bay View where I grew up. We sought advice from Jim and Ann Marie Rhodes, friends who lived on the 4400 block of North 25th Street. We really liked the 'look' of the neighborhood from other trips driving up-and-down the streets. The white stucco bungalows and the trees forming a canopy over the streets gave a feeling we were in Cape Cod. We had never seen a neighborhood as beautiful as this. So, when Jim and Ann Marie said, 'oh, by the way, the house right around the block is for sale,' we jumped at the chance to see it for ourselves. We loved it and purchased it 'on the spot.' We were going to be 'next door' to our very dear friends in a super neat home at a price we could afford. Oh, Happy Day!"

He discusses how he and the association work to keep negativity at bay. "I would say the most important 'maintaining and celebrating the neighborhood' component is the application of participatory democracy in how we select, activate, and maintain our neighborhood-friendly projects. The members also cherish 'community' in that it engages in other, beyond-our-boundaries' projects that bring the resources of the many to benefit the broader Garden Homes neighborhood. Two efforts are the association members' involvements in the 30th Street Industrial Corridor Corporation's 'The Garden Homes Neighborhood Plan' and the home renovation project that will make-over 22 homes in the area."

The neighborhood that began with a unique application of participatory democracy has broadened this practice today.

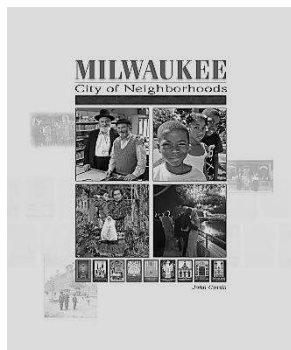


## Books on Milwaukee Neighborhoods



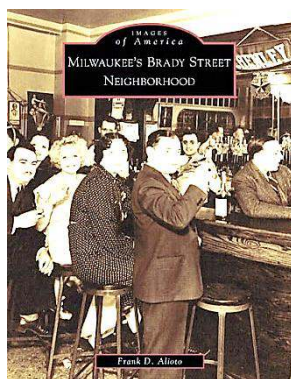
### Strolling through Milwaukee's Ethnic History By Jill Florence Lackey and Rick Petrie

This latest work provides an "up close and personal" look at local ethnic life by directing readers to the neighborhoods and venues where the groups left their marks. It brings readers directly into their experiences, whether it involves strolling through the neighborhoods they built or participating in contemporary ethnic activities. "Strolling . . . is an intriguing guide to the ethnic history in our midst and a colorful reminder that Milwaukee has always been a city of newcomers." - John Gurda. <http://mecahmilwaukee.com>



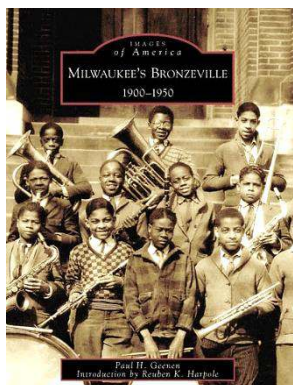
### Milwaukee, City of Neighborhoods By John Gurda

*Milwaukee: City of Neighborhoods* is the most comprehensive account of grassroots Milwaukee ever published. Richly illustrated, engagingly written, and organized for maximum ease of use, the book is a fine-grained introduction to the Milwaukee community, and its communities, that will endure as a standard work for years to come. <https://historicmilwaukee.org/milwaukee-city-of-neighborhoods/>.



### Milwaukee's Brady Street Neighborhood By Frank D. Alioto

Milwaukee's Brady Street neighborhood began in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a crossroads between middle-class Yankees from the east and early German settlers. Polish and Italian immigrants soon followed, working the mills, tanneries, and brewers that lined the riverbank. The hippies arrived in the 1960s. By the 1980s the area fell into blight, neglect and decay. Now, a true model for new urbanism, the Brady Street neighborhood is the midst of a renaissance. <https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/Products/9780738551746>



### Milwaukee's Bronzeville: 1900-1950 By Paul H. Geenen, Introduction by Rueben Harpole

With the migration of African American sharecroppers to northern cities in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the African American population of Milwaukee grew from fewer than 1,000 in 1900 to nearly 22,000 by 1950. Most settled along Walnut Street, an area that came to be known as Milwaukee's Bronzeville, a thriving residential, business, and entertainment community. Bronzeville is remembered by African American elders as a good place to grow up. <https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/Products/9780738540610>

## The dramatic gift of one author

Mystery writer and Milwaukee native, Sienna Jacks, is creating a series of novels that take place in Milwaukee neighborhoods called "The Milwaukee Series." She is donating all of her royalties to Urban Anthropology's neighborhood exhibits' program.

The proceeds from *The House Off of Brady* (see previous page) are currently being used to create all new exhibits at the Rozga Family's Old South Side Settlement Museum.

Mystery novels that are currently available or shall eventually be included in this series will take place in these Milwaukee neighborhoods:

- Brady Street
- Bronzeville/Brewer's Hill
- Lincoln Village
- Walker's Point
- Riverwest
- Granville

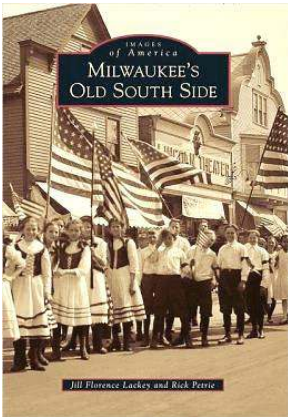
Currently, all of Sienna Jacks' novels have perfect five-star ratings from readers at Amazon.com

To enjoy wonderful reading and to contribute to neighborhood museums and exhibits, purchase the Jacks' books from the publisher at

<http://mecahmilwaukee.com/Fiction.html>



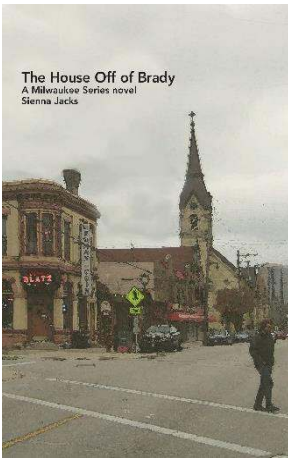
## Books on Milwaukee Neighborhoods (Cont.)



**Milwaukee's Old South Side**  
By Jill Florence Lackey and Rick Petrie

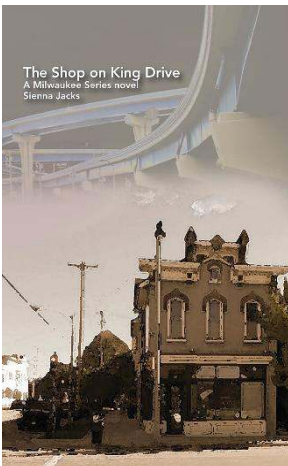
In the late 1800s, the Old South Side was developed by immigrant Poles, who became the dominant population for over 100 years. While other Milwaukee ethnic neighborhoods gradually dissipated in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century because of assimilation pressures, freeway building, or urban renewal programs, the Old South Side remained solidly Polish. A survey nearly a half century later revealed that people of 110 national backgrounds now lived in the Old South Side, with the three largest groups being Mexicans, Poles, and American Indians. <https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/Products/9780738590691>

## Fiction



**The House Off of Brady** A Milwaukee Series novel  
By Sienna Jacks

Two young anthropologists, trying to convince a local nonprofit to sponsor a neighborhood house museum, must show that the historical occupants of the house were representative of Milwaukee's Brady Street, and that they project positive images for the neighborhood. Their efforts are boosted by a personal journal left behind by one of the home's occupants--Giuseppe Russo. But as the young anthropologists translate and transcribe the journal, they learn that Giuseppe had been banished from his former community in the Third Ward. Are they about to stumble on information that could kill the project—or something perhaps even worse? <http://mecahmilwaukee.com>



**The Shop on King Drive** A Milwaukee Series novel  
By Sienna Jacks

A mystery arises out of the ruins of urban renewal. Two young anthropologists, conducting research that would illuminate one dark period in Milwaukee's central city history, confront painful but sometimes puzzling accounts. During the 1950s and 1960s, over 8,000 homes and an entire business district of the African American Bronzeville community were razed. While interviewing survivors, the anthropologists note that the name of a particular attorney kept entering the conversation. The lawyer claimed to be helping the black community fight the removal, but his efforts had the opposite effect. Suspicions remained for over 50 years over who was behind the deception and why. <http://mecahmilwaukee.com>

## Just released:

A new Sienna Jacks novel in the Milwaukee Series, entitled *The Fabled Theft at Kozy Park*, a mystery that takes place in Milwaukee's Lincoln Village neighborhood.

**Currently, all of Sienna Jacks' novels have perfect five-star ratings from readers at Amazon.com**

To enjoy wonderful reading and to contribute to neighborhood museums, purchase the Jacks' books from the publisher at:

<http://mecahmilwaukee.com/Fiction.html>

*In memory of George Floyd:*  
UNDER THE KNEE

Let us always remember the voice  
As we balance what's just with what's gentle  
As we elect our makers of policy  
As we create and enforce our laws  
Let us always remember the voice  
As we assess our governing bodies  
As we reform the challenging limbs  
As we deny the debasing knees of domination  
Let us always remember the voice  
Whose bearer lay under the lynching knee  
As he recalled the love of his mother  
And invoked humanity's most universal prayer

That last moment  
That last moment  
. . . when he uttered her name.

## *Milwaukee Neighborhood Forum*

*Milwaukee Neighborhood Forum* is published bimonthly by Urban Anthropology Inc. and is managed by volunteer anthropologists. The purpose of the newsletter is to offer neighborhood groups and individuals opportunities to share news and information about their neighborhoods. The newsletter does not receive funds from any external source. The editor is Dr. Jill Florence Lackey.

### **Subscriptions**

The newsletter is emailed to anyone wishing to receive it. If you wish your email or that of a friend to be added to the subscriber list, send the email addresses to [JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com) and indicate the name of this publication (as UrbAn publishes more than one newsletter).

### **Submitting events**

*Milwaukee Neighborhood Forum* is interested in events from individuals, businesses, and organizations that have a neighborhood appeal. These can include block parties, church picnics, local music festivals, sports on the block, get-moving activities that take place outdoors, and art and theatre events involving neighborhoods. All event submissions should include a one-sentence description, date and time, location, and website or phone number for additional information. Photos may also be submitted.

### **Submitting stories/press releases on neighborhoods**

In the spirit of Jane Jacobs, stories should always focus on assets of neighborhoods. They must be between 100 and 400 words. Some editing will be done to match our style guidelines and spatial constraints. We will write the stories for you if you simply send us a list of the information that you want included. A photo is always required for a story to be published. Please do not refer us to websites to collect information or photos. If we write your story from the general information you send, we do not send proofs for approval.

If you are someone who has created a successful neighborhood project and wish to be featured in the Forum, please also contact Dr. Jill.

### **Submission deadlines**

Submit events or stories by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding publication. Publication dates are on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June, August, October, December, February, and April. Please send your stories to Dr. Jill at [JFLanthropologist@currently.com](mailto:JFLanthropologist@currently.com)



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

Email [RickPetrie@gmail.com](mailto:RickPetrie@gmail.com)

Now live . . .

## **Website on 191 Milwaukee neighborhoods**

**Links on each neighborhood include:**

- *6 to 35 pages of information*
- *Brief neighborhood description*
- *Population-focused history (including ethnic roots)*
- *Snapshots of commercial districts of the past*
- *Quotes from residents*
- *Quotes from oral histories (where available)*
- *Low cost nearby outings for families*
- *Demographics of current neighborhood*
- *Photos of neighborhood*

*The website currently includes ALL 191 of the neighborhoods, courtesy of Urban Anthropology Inc.*

<http://neighborhoodsinmilwaukee.org/>