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MAKING AN OLD-WORLD MILWAUKEE:

GERMAN HERITAGE, NOSTALGIA AND THE RESHAPING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CITY

by

Joseph B. Walzer

A Dissertation Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

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August 2017

ABSTRACT

MAKING AN OLD-WORLD MILWAUKEE: GERMAN HERITAGE, NOSTALGIA AND THE RESHAPING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CITY

by

Joseph B. Walzer

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2017
Under the Supervision of Professor Rachel Buff

This dissertation examines the importance of white ethnicity, and especially Germanness, in the "civic branding" and urban restructuring efforts of city officials, civic boosters, and business leaders in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Scholars have increasingly identified the significant roles the "revival" of European ethnic identities played in maintaining white racial privilege in response to the Civil Rights Movement since the 1960s. I contribute to these new veins of scholarship by tracing the continued and evolving prominence of Germanness in the Midwestern city of Milwaukee, long after common assumptions of ethnic assimilation might have expected such nineteenth century German ethnic identities to have "melted" into American society. My research in civic and community organization records, as well as local newspaper stories, reveals the active, yet often-uncoordinated efforts of various cultural agents and power brokers to maintain white ethnic, German hegemony in Milwaukee between the 1920s and 1980s. The combined crises of World War, National Prohibition, and a perceived weakening of German influence in the diversifying city prompted civic boosters and business interests who relied on the privileged place of Germanness in Milwaukee's social order to secure German hegemony in nostalgic memories of "Old Milwaukee" in the 1920s through 1940s. These narratives offered carefully crafted visions of Milwaukee's Germanness as

productive, pragmatic, yet fun, and characterized German cultural contributions—especially the festivity and hospitality associated with *gemütlichkeit*—as essential to the city's nineteenth century development and charming Old World character. As working class politics, growing racial inequality, and civil rights movements challenged Milwaukee's prevailing social order in the decades following the Second World War, business leaders, developers, and pro-business public officials deployed these narratives of heritage and nostalgia in their efforts to reimagine the city as a post-industrial tourist and entertainment destination. In the process, such constructions effectively secured white ethnic claims to power and privilege in urban space. Repeatedly elided from visions of Old Milwaukee, people of color negotiated a progressively uneven socio-economic urban terrain in which they were considered perennial tenants. Meanwhile, these same visions encouraged white ethnic residents and visitors to think of the city as inherently "theirs."

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INTRODUCTION

In a 1978 issue of *Inland*, a Midwestern regional-interest journal published by the Inland Steel Company, Chicago author Sheldon A. Mix extolled the virtues of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and its growing reputation as a destination for area travelers. "At least once a year, many Chicagoans—and ex-Chicagoans living in the suburbs—drive north to Milwaukee for a day of sightseeing and hearty dining," Mix wrote. "Only 90 minutes away, they find a city several notches smaller than Chicago with a Fun Calendar to crowd both daylight and evening hours; an urban adventureground where the pace is less hectic, where getting around is easier, traffic is lighter, and finding reasonably priced garages where you can park your own car is no chore."[1] While the city provided many of the amenities of a modern American metropolis, including tall buildings, an engaging public museum and zoo, well-groomed public parks, and excellent restaurants, Mix indicated, they were uniquely juxtaposed with Milwaukee's continued appreciation for things that were old-fashioned—exhibited in the preservation of historic churches, theaters, and its ornate nineteenth century City Hall and Public Library buildings.[2] Moreover, Milwaukee offered visitors an array of Summer festivals in its "fun calendar," capped by Summerfest—an event featuring rides, games, food, beer, and popular music acts that "brightens Milwaukee's lakefront for 11 days" every July.[3] Yet, among Milwaukee's most alluring aspects for visitors, Mix suggested, was the lingering pride of its residents in their ethnic heritage and culture. "Milwaukee displays its ethnicity like a banner," he noted, citing the Holiday Folk Fair held in downtown every fall, which offers "food, music, costumes, and

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[1] Sheldon A. Mix, "Milwaukee Ramble," *Inland: The Magazine of the Middle West* 25, no. 2 (1978): 15.
[2] Ibid., 19–20.
[3] Ibid., 16.

dancing of 45 local ethnic groups," and popular restaurants, like Fazios' Landmark and Serbian Old Town, which continued to serve ethnic specialties.[4] Echoing sociologist John Rector Barton's claim that Wisconsin's diverse population resembled more of a "beef stew" than a "melting pot," Mix asserted, "Milwaukee's 'beef stew' keeps simmering as ethnic traditions and distinctions are preserved in churches, festivals, and in the makeup of neighborhoods."[5] Rather than "melting" into a uniform Americanness, in other words, ethnic identities remained largely intact, but mixed together to form a distinctly "Old World" feel to the city.

Although he recognized that many ethnicities contributed to Milwaukee's cultural "stew," Mix implied that the most important ingredient (perhaps the beef in his metaphor) was Germanness. "The city's Germanic flavor is well-known, of course," he asserted, "and remains prominent—through restaurants like Karl Ratzsch's and the Golden Zither, numerous businesses with German names—notably the breweries—and such buildings as the Turnverein Milwaukee Hall."[6] Mix indicated that this German civic identity was rooted in early mass migrations of Germans to the city. "Germans started arriving in Milwaukee as early as 1836," he explained. "In the next decade there came large numbers of intellectual, cultured, in many cases *wealthy* immigrants who had fled Germany following the unsuccessful rebellion against monarchism in 1848."[7] The continued prevalence of German food, beer, and music in the city's culture was, therefore, a testament to the strength of these nineteenth century Old World ties. As Mix noted, the significance of Germanness to Milwaukee's cultural character was often articulated through the term, "*gemütlichkeit*"—"a word whose meaning is hard to pin down," he notes. When he

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[4] Ibid., 20.
[5] Ibid., 21.
[6] Ibid., 20.
[7] Ibid.

surveyed different Milwaukeeans on the word's definition, he received very different answers. "A waitress at Mader's replied, 'Oh, that's 'good appetite,' or something like that,'" he related, adding: "Roger Szymanski of the Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau says, 'It's a word to describe Milwaukee people's ability to make people feel at home here.'"[8] Mix concluded that *gemütlichkeit*, and thus the Germanness it articulated, was not only evident in the ethnic restaurants and cultural displays that were prevalent throughout the city, but also "something, admittedly elusive, that in the end creates good feeling and makes Milwaukee a wonderfully easy city to like."[9]

Mix's portrayal of Milwaukee as a fun, unique, and leisurely city of good ethnic food, beer, and *gemütlichkeit* in the late-1970s reflected decades of collaborative work between municipal officials, business leaders, and civic boosters to redevelop and market the city as a travel and entertainment destination. This was a significant transformation for a city once touted as the "machine shop of the world." Formed at the confluence of three rivers—the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers—on the western shore of Lake Michigan, Milwaukee grew as an industrial powerhouse through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, becoming a key national manufacturing center for flour, iron, leather, heavy machinery, meat products, and, most famously, beer.[10] Like many other American cities, however, Milwaukee's traditional industrial economy became increasingly unstable in the decades following the Second World War as its nineteenth century factories became antiquated and manufacturers left the city for more modern, spacious complexes in the suburbs and to pursue cheaper labor markets in the

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[8] Ibid., 24.
[9] Ibid.
[10] John Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999), 160–69.

American South, Mexico, and overseas.[11] Moreover, downtown business owners grew more anxious about the future of the city-center as its buildings and infrastructure aged, and upwardly mobile white Milwaukeeans moved out of the city seeking the ideal of a middle-class suburban life. Milwaukee's civic officials and business leaders, like their counterparts in other cities, responded to these developments by placing greater stock in service, retail, entertainment, and tourism industries, and forming new public-private partnerships to restructure the city's landscapes and update its infrastructure to accommodate a post-industrial urban economy.

Unique to Milwaukee's restructuring efforts, however, was the centrality of German ethnic heritage and culture to this vision. A major site of German migration since before the city was chartered in 1846, as Mix suggests, Milwaukee had gained an international reputation as the "German Athens of America." German festivals, food, beer, music, and other cultural institutions dominated the city's nineteenth century social landscape, and German entrepreneurs—most notably the brewing giants Schlitz, Pabst, Blatz, and Miller—helped develop the city's industrial economy. Although the number of foreign-born Germans settling in Milwaukee declined dramatically by the early decades of the twentieth century, the number of residents who could claim German heritage remained a clear majority of the city's population. According to common assumptions of assimilation and Americanization, Milwaukee's German ethnic institutions and identities would have gradually disappeared over time as subsequent generations increasingly adopted the behaviors and responsibilities of modern American life. Indeed, this was a fear of German cultural organizations, civic boosters, and commercial interests who relied on Milwaukee's German identity for their survival, including the brewing, sausage, restaurant, and

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[11] Ibid., 377–79; Marc V. Levine, "The Economic State of Milwaukee's Inner City: 1970-2000" (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development, 2002); Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (New York: The New Press, 2001).

tourist industries—particularly as the city's Germanness faced questions of loyalty in the First World War and the challenge of National Prohibition. Rather than allowing Germanness to completely "melt" into a uniform Americanness, however, these agents worked to secure German hegemony in the city's changing socio-economic landscape through nostalgic visions of "Old Milwaukee." In constructing narratives of the "good old days" in the nineteenth century city, civic boosters, historians, journalists, businesses, and other cultural producers carefully selected and celebrated aspects of German identity and culture that complimented American values and expectations—portraying Milwaukee's Germans as productive, entrepreneurial, and pragmatic citizens who also knew how to have a good time. Germanness, they suggested, was not only unthreatening and attractive, but also essential to Milwaukee's character.

As they worked to retool the city's twentieth century socio-economic landscape, civic promoters deployed these nostalgic visions of an Old Milwaukee rooted in Old World identities as an aesthetic scheme, or civic "brand," in their restructuring efforts. In the process, growth interests carefully selected and reinterpreted physical and social remnants from the city's history and German heritage to help advance their visions for Milwaukee's new destination economy. As Mix's account suggests, they were particularly interested in notions of *gemütlichkeit*. A German word that does not translate well into English, *gemütlichkeit* is often used to describe feelings of fun, comfort, and goodwill commonly experienced in large social settings. In his 1970 Milwaukee history, local journalist Robert W. Wells playfully defined it as "the feeling a Milwaukeean gets when the food is piled high on the plate, the beer is flowing freely, and someone from out of town is there to pick up the check."[12] Historically, *gemütlichkeit* was also

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[12] Robert W. Wells, *This Is Milwaukee: A Colorful Portrait of the City That Made Beer Famous* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 1.

used to describe the dominance of German cultural institutions and traditions in the early city, as visitors and residents noted the contributions of German "festive culture"—festivals, parades, balls, theater, art, music, and drinking customs—to Milwaukee's nineteenth century "*gemütlich* character" and its reputation as the German Athens.[13] By the 1930s and 1940s, however, city officials, civic boosters, and business leaders increasingly used *gemütlichkeit* to characterize Milwaukee's commitment to hospitality—providing compelling attractions and a festive, welcoming atmosphere to tourists and visiting convention-goers. In the decades following the Second World War, the city's growth interests worked to cultivate these visions of *gemütlichkeit* in new civic festivals (most notably Summerfest), downtown entertainment districts, and neighborhood revitalization projects they hoped would make Milwaukee an attractive destination for tourists and prospective residents to live, work, and play. These deployments of *gemütlichkeit* not only framed Milwaukee's reinvention as a twentieth century urban playground in notions of the city's Germanness, but also transformed that Germanness into a commodity that could be neatly packaged and sold to cultural consumers.

In advancing nostalgic visions of Old Milwaukee and German heritage, however, growth interests also delineated important boundaries of acceptability and belonging, which they in turn inscribed in the city's landscape as they deployed these narratives "on the ground." Although recognizing the importance of political radicalism in the development of German Milwaukee—particularly the "Forty-Eighters" who fled the German states after the failed democratic revolutions of 1848-1849—Old Milwaukee narratives largely ignored the continued importance of Milwaukee's German radicals and their descendants in the ongoing pursuits of social justice—

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[13] Moritz Wagner and Carl Scherzer, *Reisen in Nordamerika in Den Jahren 1852 Und 1853*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Arnoldische Buchhandlung, 1854), 116–17; Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 172.

especially in the labor and women's rights movements. If anything, they portrayed German revolutionary visions as idealistic pipe dreams that had no bearing on their industrial productivity and commitment to the values and responsibilities of the American nation. This effectively distanced the city's Germanness from ongoing activism and revolutionary ideologies of German Milwaukeeans that did not fit the entrepreneurial visions of civic power brokers. Moreover, while they typically acknowledged or even celebrated the city's growing ethnic diversity, these narratives often limited their accounts of Milwaukee's pluralism to include the Irish, English, Poles, Greeks, Italians, Scandinavians, and other Europeans who, as Mix suggested, "contributed early to Milwaukee's ethnic makeup."[14] Consistently missing from prevailing representations of Old Milwaukee and its expanding pluralism were considerations of the long presence and growth of the city's African American and Latinx communities through the city's history. Much like European immigrants before them, African American migrants from the South, as well as Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were increasingly drawn to central Milwaukee neighborhoods by the early-to-mid twentieth century as they pursued new economic opportunities in Northern industries. And, like their European predecessors, these newcomers established their own residential and commercial districts, churches, and cultural organizations. Yet, these non-white communities were also racially segregated from their white ethnic neighbors, relegated to inner-city neighborhoods on the near-North and -South Sides through a combination of legal, social, and economic pressures and racial violence. Narratives of an Old Milwaukee rooted in Old World heritage marginalized non-white, non-European residents as perpetual outsiders in the city—tenants of urban space that did not truly "belong" to them.

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[14] Mix, "Milwaukee Ramble," 20.

The efforts of Milwaukee's power brokers to secure the city's German identity in representations of Old Milwaukee was grounded in two central and interrelated struggles over the social order of the mid-to-late twentieth century city. The first was a political contest over the roles of municipal government in shaping Milwaukee's economic order, and who would benefit from it. The needs of Milwaukee's working class communities dominated much of the city's politics through the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century as the labor movement significantly influenced local elections and civic policy, and, aside from brief interruptions in 1912-1916 and 1940-1948, socialist administrations controlled City Hall between 1910 and 1960. Historians have recently illuminated the efforts of business leaders, who felt their interests were increasingly muted in the city's prevailing working class politics and emboldened by heightened Cold War anti-communism, to usher in a more pro-business, anti-labor, political regime in Milwaukee in the decades following the Second World War. This was particularly driven by business heads and property owners who had a vested interest in the successful revitalization of downtown. The key shift in municipal political ideology from what Eric Fure-Slocum characterizes as working class politics to growth politics was marked by the transition from the mayoral administration of Socialist Frank Zeidler to the more business-friendly Democrat Henry Maier in 1960. While Zeidler worked to maintain the city's commitment to expanding municipal services and institutions for the public good, the Maier administration formed new public-private partnerships with city business interests to mobilize city resources to create new urban marketplaces and reorienting city services to advance private interests.[15]

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[15] Eric Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City: Working-Class and Growth Politics in 1940s Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Tula A. Connell, *Conservative Counterrevolution: Challenging Liberalism in 1950s Milwaukee* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016); Jack Norman, "Congenial Milwaukee: A Segregated City," in *Unequal Partnerships: The Political Economy of Urban Redevelopment in Postwar America*, ed. Gregory D. Squires (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 178–201; Stephen Meyer, *"Stalin Over*

Although these shifts were quite similar in resemblance to the "neoliberal turn" David Harvey, Neil Smith, and other scholars identified in New York, Los Angeles, and other national and global settings since the 1970s, Milwaukee's "conservative counterrevolution" of the 1950s and 1960s reveals a pro-business movement in American urban politics with much earlier roots.[16]

In the context of these political shifts, the elision of working class radicalism in prevailing narratives of Old Milwaukee endeavored to erase memories of German influences, developments, and victories in the city's working class politics—emphasizing in its place a vision of Germans as productive contributors to Milwaukee's entrepreneurial order. Moreover, by appropriating *gemütlichkeit* as a cultural commodity, growth interests gradually severed it from its collective, community-based meanings. In other words, *gemütlichkeit* was something Milwaukeeans and visitors experienced more through their engagement of downtown entertainment spaces or events like Summerfest than through community organizations and everyday neighborhood relationships.

The second key struggle was over Milwaukee's racial order and the ability of marginalized people of color to freely access city services and negotiate urban spaces. Historians have increasingly illuminated the complex forces of racial segregation that have shaped the experiences of people of color in Milwaukee through the twentieth century, and the city's role in broader freedom and civil rights movements that worked to challenge them—particularly the open housing and school desegregation struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. While gaining a

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Wisconsin:" The Making and Unmaking of Militant Unionism, 1900-1950 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

[16] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996); Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, new edition (London: Verso, 2006); Wendy Brown, "Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy," in *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 37–59; Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

tenuous foothold in the city's industrial economy in the early-to-mid twentieth century, late-twentieth century deindustrialization and economic restructuring intensified the city's already starkly uneven landscapes of race and class. Poor and working-class people of color struggled to maintain access to the city in the face of growing rates of unemployment and incarceration, displacement from urban renewal schemes, deteriorating police-community relationships, and depleting public services.[17] Milwaukee's problems became especially glaring as tensions erupted into racial unrest over three nights in the summer of 1967. Although much smaller in scale than other similar "riots" in Newark and Detroit that summer, news of fires, vandalism, and alleged "snipers" in the North Side neighborhoods near downtown shook business owners and white ethnic residents who feared what such disorder might mean for the future of the city and their place in it.[18]

In the context of Milwaukee's widening racial and class disparities and growing tensions of the mid-to-late twentieth century, seemingly positive expressions of the city's German ethnic heritage and identity and the inscription of nostalgic narratives of Old Milwaukee in its socio-economic landscape represented an attempt to secure German hegemony in the city's prevailing social order, and claim white ethnic power and privilege in the city's racial geography. In emphasizing the role of Germans in Milwaukee's nineteenth century development and limiting considerations of its growing diversity only to the contributions of other European ethnic groups,

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[17] Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*, repr. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Bill Dahlk, *Against the Wind: African Americans and the Schools in Milwaukee, 1963-2002* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010); James K. Nelsen, *Educating Milwaukee: How One City's History of Segregation and Struggle Shaped Its Schools* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015).
[18] Jones, *The Selma of the North*, 143–68; Frank A. Aukofer, *City With A Chance* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1968).

Old Milwaukee narratives defined important lines of racial belonging in the city. Such visions imagined Milwaukee as inherently white ethnic space—particularly German in "flavor"—rooted in the nineteenth century migrations of Europeans who helped build the city into an exceptional American industrial powerhouse. Milwaukee's growth interests reinforced these visions as they established new relationships with Germany during the Cold War, which they hoped would yield models and methods for rooting their revitalization projects in "authentic" Old World aesthetics and traditions. Conversely, the elision of non-white residents from spatial imaginaries of Old Milwaukee rendered them as permanent outsiders—transient occupants of "naturally" white ethnic spaces that could be rightfully displaced whenever the needs of the city warranted. By inscribing such visions of racial belonging in the city's landscape through Old Milwaukee narratives, growth interests also articulated important notions of security. As Mix's account suggests, visitors often only learned of Milwaukee's racial struggles by picking up a local newspaper—not in their experiences exploring the city's downtown blend of modern and Old World attractions. "[Visitors] have the luxury of being unencumbered" he claimed of Milwaukee's tensions, "like grandparents who can enjoy their grandchildren for the day and give then back at night."[19] By building downtown entertainment spaces and revitalizing neighborhood commercial districts that were rooted in Old World, white ethnic identities, in other words, Milwaukee's growth interests secured control of city space for a new tourist and entertainment economy by completely severing these spaces from their long histories of racial struggle. Erasing memories of racial conflict meant creating a pleasant and comfortable place for white ethnic visitors and residents to live, work, shop, and play.

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[19] Mix, "Milwaukee Ramble," 15.

Scholars have identified the continued importance of ethnic identities in maintaining white racial privilege in response to the Civil Rights Movement, contrary to common notions of ethnic assimilation. As Matthew Frye Jacobson shows, persisting systems of white privilege were largely hidden in the "resurgence" of ethnic identity in the later decades of the twentieth century, and ethnicity became a powerful tool for staking white racial claims to economic, political, and spatial rights and privileges in American society. Jacobson argues that, as African Americans increasingly emphasized experiences of struggle and oppression through historical "roots" narratives as a way to generate racial solidarity and stake claim to equal rights in American society, "working-class whites who had never exactly lost their ethnic identifications now mobilized [their ethnic identity] on the basis of group cohesion, collective destiny, and often, group rights under siege."[20] Jacobson explains that cultural heritage projects and symbols, like the Ellis Island national heritage site in New York Harbor and Saint Patrick's Day celebrations in large cities throughout the United States, allowed white ethnics to act from both the perspective of present white privilege and ethnic roots of struggle and hardship—thereby constructing a framework that permitted whites to not only "feel better" about America's past racial sins and perpetuate white racial hegemony, but help "disappear" their racial privilege altogether.[21] The work of Milwaukee's growth interests to emphasize white ethnic heritage, and Germanness in particular, certainly fits these broader claims of white privilege through ethnic heritage projects Jacobson identifies in the late-nineteenth century American national imaginary. It also reveals that, at least in the case of Milwaukee, these patterns permeated all levels of local

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[20] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 6-7.
[21] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 19-31, 41-59, 70-71; these patterns are also analyzed in great depth in Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

urban politics, from city hall to neighborhood organizations, to secure white ethnic privilege in the city's changing socio-economic order.

As Jennifer Nugent Duffy reveals, the perseverance of white ethnic identities was an extremely selective and uneven *process*. European immigrants and their descendants experienced "racial hazing" as they entered American society. Duffy notes that working-class Catholic Irish immigrants were especially subjected to such hazing, epitomized in nineteenth century "caricatures of the apelike, drunk, dirty, lazy, and potentially violent 'Paddy.'" Duffy argues that these experiences formed a racial consciousness that drove Irish-American communities to adhere to "racial expectations" of whiteness—stressing "good" qualities of white ethnicity, like hard-working male breadwinners, civic respectability, hetero-normative families, and American patriotism, that upheld the existing racial order, and ignoring or jettisoning the "bad" qualities, like "laziness, drinking, potentially threatening public behavior, and unmarried partnership," that undermined it.[22] For the Irish that Duffy examines in Yonkers, New York, this distinction played out in generational politics of the late-twentieth century ethnic revival—particularly as the Irishness of older, more established generations collided with the more questionable "racial fitness" of Irish immigrants who arrived (often undocumented) in the 1980s and 1990s.[23]

Although German-Americans typically enjoyed a far more privileged place in the American social hierarchy than Irish-Americans, American involvement in two World Wars against Germany called German-American loyalty—and thus their racial aptitude—into question. Much like the Irish of Yonkers, German Milwaukeeans and the civic and business interests that relied on German ethnic identity reframed Germanness in terms of ethnic

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[22] Jennifer Nugent Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy?: Racial Expectations and the Struggle for Irish American Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 2-3, 87.
[23] Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy?*, 49-88.

appropriateness—constructing narratives that emphasized memories of productivity, entrepreneurialism, cultural vibrancy, and other "good" aspects of the city's German heritage, and minimalized or elided memories of political radicalism, intra-ethnic conflict, and militant German nationalism they considered "bad." In Yonkers, Duffy explains, such selective visions of ethnic heritage informed politics of "authenticity" in Irish bars in the 1990s. City leaders and business interests worked to advance visions of the "Guinness Pub"—places that offered aesthetic representations of Irishness that were geared towards tourists and middle class consumers—over more racially diverse places where actual, recent Irish immigrants frequented.[24] Selective visions of Germanness similarly informed how Milwaukee's growth interests inscribed German ethnic heritage in urban spaces, favoring aesthetic representations of German heritage to form more racially exclusive, tourist- and consumer-friendly entertainment districts and events over more inclusive urban spaces.

My dissertation builds on these new veins of scholarship on white ethnicity by tracing the continued importance of Germanness in Milwaukee—particularly in the efforts of city officials, civic boosters, and business leaders to restructure the city in the mid-to-late twentieth century—long after common assumptions of ethnic assimilation might have expected such nineteenth century German ethnic identities to have "melted" into American society. Facing the combined crises of World War with Germany, National Prohibition, and a perceived weakening of German influence in the diversifying city, civic boosters worked to secure German hegemony in the city through the construction of nostalgic narratives of Old Milwaukee in the 1920s through 1940s. These narratives carefully crafted a vision of Milwaukee's Germanness as productive, pragmatic, yet fun, and characterized German cultural contributions—especially *gemütlichkeit*—as essential

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[24] Duffy, *Who's Your Paddy?*, 89–122.

to the growth and character American city. As working class politics, growing racial inequality, and civil rights movements posed new challenges to the city's prevailing social order in the decades following the Second World War, Milwaukee's growth interests deployed these narratives of heritage and nostalgia in their efforts to reimagine the city as a post-industrial tourist and entertainment destination. These endeavors not only appropriated Old World identities, traditions, and aesthetics as cultural commodities of a new urban economy in Milwaukee, but also worked to secure white ethnic claims to power and privilege in urban space. While people of color negotiated a progressively uneven socio-economic urban terrain in which they were considered perennial tenants, Old Milwaukee narratives inscribed in the racial geography of the new Milwaukee encouraged white ethnic visitors and Milwaukee residents to think of the city as inherently "theirs."

At the heart of these efforts were notions of racial belonging in Milwaukee's evolving social geography. George Lipsitz provides an especially useful framework for thinking about these issues in his description of what he terms the "white spatial imaginary" manifested in American urban development. Lipsitz argues that white urban power brokers deployed various cultural institutions, legal contracts, public policies, zoning restrictions, and public-private partnerships in American cities to not only secure white claims to capital, amenities, power, and privilege over "unworthy" people of color, but to also "take place"—to maintain and accumulate claims to urban space (and all of its wealth, power, and privilege) as inherently white space.[25] In other words, urban racial segregation is the product of a historic compounding of racial differentiation and notions of white supremacy as privileges and values attributed to whiteness as

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[25] George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 25-50; Lipsitz builds on his arguments from *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

defined against "blackness" and racial "otherness" in the past built on themselves. As Lipsitz notes, a key element to the perpetuation of these systems of white privilege is the denial that it exists, or, as he describes facetiously, the encouragement of "[white] people to think the world begins when they walk into the room," or for "people born on third base to believe they hit a triple." The inheritance of wealth and privilege through generations has allowed for a certain degree of separation between racist acts of the past and their lasting legacies, effectively obscuring persisting practices, processes, and systems of white privilege. By advocating for policy, business interests, property rights, and other "business as usual," whites perpetuated and enriched their privilege without having to "speak its name" or even being aware of its presence. Embedded in these patterns of power and privilege in everyday life, Lipsitz argues, are understandings of belonging and acceptability. Such "social warrants," he explains, "are widely shared assumptions about what is permitted and what is forbidden, about who is included and who is excluded. … A social warrant functions as a de facto social charter that contains foundational principles about obligations and rights."[26] As Milwaukee's growth interests worked to reproduce nostalgic visions of Old World heritage in Milwaukee's landscape, in other words, they effectively produced spatial imaginaries where people who did not fit the ideals, values, and aesthetics of those visions—most expressly people of color—did not "belong."

Milwaukee's white spatial imaginaries and social warrants of racial belonging were deeply entrenched in ideologies of white ethnic, especially German, hegemony. As Tom August reveals, the order in which migrant groups settled in Milwaukee often governed their place and privilege in the city's "ethnic hierarchy:" where they lived and how well they were treated by

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[26] George Lipsitz, "Policing Place and Taxing Time on Skid Row," in *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter*, ed. Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton (London: Verso, 2016), 134–35.

those who had established a privileged place the city's emerging social order before their arrival—namely American settlers from New York and New England, and German immigrants. Much like the patterns James R. Barrett, Thomas A. Guglielmo, and other scholars of whiteness identified in New York, Chicago, Boston, and other major American cities, Milwaukee's newest European immigrant groups followed their earlier counterparts into social acceptance as they learned the benefits of the inherent whiteness of their ethnic heritage.[27] In Milwaukee, these paths to acceptability were largely forged by Germans—the city's largest, and among its earliest ethnic groups. The Old World and Germanic "flavor" various observers identified in Milwaukee over time reflected the white-ethnicity Germans had shaped through their early ascension in the city's social order. In accepting whiteness and all its benefits in Milwaukee's ethnic hierarchy, other European immigrant groups also agreed to the socio-cultural frameworks of Germanness that dominated it.[28] As Mix's account suggests, for instance, all white ethnic drinking customs, food, music, and other celebratory traditions were commonly understood as part of Milwaukee's festive culture and *gemütlich* atmosphere.

Cultural agents and agencies, or what Franca Iacovetta calls "gatekeepers," initiated newcomers in social norms and continuously reimagined and reinterpreted dominant ideologies to fit changing socio-economic conditions.[29] These dynamics are most often associated with the

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[27] Tom August, *From Assimilation to Multiculturalism: Managing Ethnic Diversity in Milwaukee* (New York: AMS Press, 2013), vii–ix, 1-26; James R. Barrett, *The Irish Way: Becoming American in the Multiethnic City* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012); Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White, The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).
[28] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 12–13.
[29] Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006); Gramsci refers to these cultural agents as "intellectuals," Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 5–23.

Americanization efforts of Progressive era reformers who worked to transform migrants into productive American citizens through instruction in English language, cooking, sewing, and other practical skills. Such Americanization programs did not represent a wholesale rejection of Old World identities and traditions in Milwaukee. Rather, new social centers and civic festivals encouraged European migrants to share food, costumes, music, dances, and other ethnic customs deemed acceptable to increasingly pluralistic notions of the city and American nationalism.[30] While progressive reformers worked to "deal with" the city's growing diversity, another group of gatekeepers—civic boosters, historians, businesses, and other cultural producers with a stake in German ethnic identity—advanced and secured dominant visions of Milwaukee as a German city, continually celebrating the prevalence of German cultural institutions, traditions, and other significant contributions to the city's development—first through German Athens narratives, and then through memories of "Old Milwaukee." In holding German contributions up as a nostalgic ideal, these visions offered an instructive model for other, subsequent ethnic groups who aspired to become white. Familiar ethnic institutions and traditions took on new racial meanings as they increasingly represented the privileged place of white ethnic residents in Milwaukee's uneven socio-economic landscape. Repeatedly eliding African-Americans and Latinx people from common understandings of both growing diversity and ethnic ascension, however, the keepers of Milwaukee's cultural hegemony ensured the "gates" of complete social acceptance were closed to non-white ethnic residents. A third group of gatekeepers I call "growth interests"—business leaders, developers, and pro-business public officials, journalists, and civic boosters—translated these visions of Milwaukee's Germanness and white ethnic hegemony into a civic "brand" and a

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[30] Victor Greene, "Dealing with Diversity: Milwaukee's Multiethnic Festivals and Urban Identity, 1840-1940," *Journal of Urban History* 31, no. 6 (September 2005): 820–49.

framework for urban redevelopment. Growth interests deployed nostalgic visions of Old Milwaukee and Old World heritage in the development of new civic festivals, renewal projects, and neighborhood revitalization efforts. While not often discernably exclusive—at times even claiming to celebrate diversity—these efforts effectively secured white-ethnic hegemony in the city's changing socio-economic landscape, and instructed white-ethnic Milwaukee residents and visitors to associate their heritage with white spatial privilege.[31]

My dissertation traces the development of Milwaukee's German identity as a civic brand and racial framework from the 1920s through 1980s. Chapter One explores how civic boosters, businesses, historians, and cultural producers worked to secure German ethnic hegemony and privilege in nostalgic narratives and imagery of Old Milwaukee as Milwaukee experienced significant changes and challenges in the early twentieth century. Such visions of Old Milwaukee were built on previous representations of the city as the "German Athens of America," which had celebrated the city's nineteenth century German cultural vibrancy and claimed it as an inherently "German city." As they perceived a weakening of this German hegemony in the wake of the First World War, National prohibition, and growing diversity, cultural producers reimagined the German Athens as Old Milwaukee through the construction of nostalgic stories and idyllic images that continued to celebrate German contributions to Milwaukee's development, yet affirmed the ultimate loyalty and value of German Milwaukeeans to the American nation. Although on the surface these renditions of Old Milwaukee promoted the city, told its history, and marketed its products to local and national audiences, they also effectively claimed a privileged place for German heritage in an increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-racial city.

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[31] Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Chapter Two considers the work of city officials, civic boosters, and business interests to deploy Milwaukee's festival tradition, rooted in the city's nineteenth century German festive culture, in new, large-scale civic events. The development of two festivals in particular—Midsummer Festival in the 1930s and Summerfest in the 1960s—reflected larger shifts in the city's socio-economic order from working class politics to growth politics. The Socialist administration of Mayor Daniel Hoan developed Midsummer Festival as a project for the public good: city government oversaw the festival's administration, its budget was derived entirely from public funds, and its attractions were primarily programmed with the city's large working-class population in mind. By contrast, Mayor Henry Maier envisioned Summerfest as an engine of economic development, modelled on Munich's Oktoberfest. While still providing ample opportunities for the participation of local residents, Summerfest worked to mobilize notions of Milwaukee's Old World festivity to draw visitors to the city. Unlike its municipally administered predecessor, Summerfest was organized within a model that favored private profit over public good, under the direction of a semi-private, non-profit corporation. In the transition between Midsummer Festival and Summerfest, Milwaukee's growth interests reified *gemütlichkeit* as a framework for civic celebrations that could accommodate, control, and ultimately profit from racial and ethnic diversity without challenging the city's prevailing Germanness and white ethnic hegemony.

Chapter Three explores the collaborative work of city officials and business interests to inscribe nostalgic ideals of Milwaukee's Old World heritage and history in the city's landscape through their endeavors to create and market more tourist-friendly, economically viable, and "liveable" urban spaces between the 1960s and 1980s. The Maier administration and key private growth boosters repeatedly turned to Germany for inspiration, cultural elements, and aesthetic

features that they could incorporate in revitalized downtown commercial and entertainment districts. Three projects particularly illuminate these "heritage renewal" efforts: the nostalgic representation of the city's Old World roots and nineteenth century heyday in the Milwaukee Public Museum's "Streets of Old Milwaukee" exhibit, which produced an effective model for downtown revitalization work; the Maier Administration's pursuit of a "sister city" relationship between Milwaukee and Munich during the Cold War, which imagined the city as inherently connected to Germany, and sought to import "authentic" elements of Old World German heritage into the city's late-twentieth century restructuring; and the plans to revitalize the northern section of downtown surrounding the Milwaukee River, which incorporated representations of Old Milwaukee and Old World heritage into visions for a Tivoli-style beer garden, Riverwalk system, and Old World Third Street entertainment district. As these projects imprinted visions of an Old Milwaukee rooted in the Old World in the city's downtown landscape, they framed prevailing understandings of racial belonging that privileged the security of white ethnic residents, visitors, and development interests over the needs and interests of poor and working-class people of color that lived in older industrial neighborhoods nearby.

Chapter Four considers they ways community organizations outside of downtown deployed similar visions of heritage and nostalgia in their efforts to protect and preserve neighborhood homes, businesses, cultural and religious institutions from proposed renewal projects, blight, and demographic changes, and to develop plans for neighborhood revitalization in the late 1960s through 1980s. The work of two organizations—the Brady Street Merchants Association and Historic Walker's Point, Inc.—are particularly instructive. While facing different challenges in their distinct socio-economic landscapes, these organizations cultivated similar historic preservation, cultural support, and community development programs to address

community problems—often instilled in rhetoric and ideologies of social justice and community activism. Eager to be part of Milwaukee's restructuring, not victims of it, however, these organizations envisioned their neighborhood revitalization plans as part of Milwaukee's larger heritage renewal efforts. As they worked to stave off blight and outside developments, these neighborhood organizations employed narratives of heritage and nostalgia in preservation and revitalization projects that reimagined neighborhood spaces as important cultural and entertainment destinations, and appealing places for young Milwaukeeans to live, work, and play. Much like downtown heritage renewal, such inscriptions of nostalgic memories and ethnic heritage in neighborhood spaces helped to delineate spatial imaginaries of racial belonging, and, ultimately, whose city Milwaukee was.

This dissertation will conclude with a brief consideration of how the social warrants nostalgic visions of Old Milwaukee and Old World German heritage growth interests produced in the city's twentieth century socio-economic landscape have shaped Milwaukee's twenty-first century racial crisis. Two incidents—the Sherman Park Uprising in the summer of 2016 and the police shooting of Dontre Hamilton in downtown's Red Arrow Park in April 2014—particularly illuminate the violence that has emanated from the racial politics of memory in the city. Much like the riot of 1967, these events have intensified anxieties of white ethnic residents, visitors, and downtown business owners about their security in downtown entertainment spaces. While social justice movements have escalated their calls to make Milwaukee a more inclusive place, prevailing visions of an Old Milwaukee rooted in Old World heritage encourage white ethnic residents to protect their privileged place in the city.

While they play important roles in this story, the main goal of this study is not to provide a comprehensive account of either the history of Germans in Milwaukee or the city's mid-to-late

twentieth century revitalization efforts. Rather, this dissertation works to trace how notions of German heritage and cultural hegemony remained significant in Milwaukee long after its Germans "became American," and how nostalgic notions of the city's Germanness shaped postwar restructuring efforts and intensified its uneven racial landscape. This project is also not intended to be a wholesale indictment of Milwaukee's Germans and white ethnic communities. European migrants have certainly played an important role in building the city, and the continued expression of these Old-World identities through traditional foods, costumes, music, dances, and, of course, beer, is part of what makes Milwaukee a unique and enjoyable place to live and visit. How we tell stories of the city's history and frame the relationships of the different groups of people who came to live and work here influence our visions of the kind of city we want to live in. Telling stories of white ethnic contributions to the city's development while consistently eliding the presence and interests of people of color, or emphasizing entrepreneurialism and industrial productivity over working-class solidarity and democratic activism promotes understandings of Milwaukee as a racially exclusionary and naturally unequal place. I present this dissertation as a love letter to my adopted hometown, challenging it to think of itself as more of an inclusionary place with a long history of interest in the public good.

CHAPTER ONE

From "German Athens" to "Old Milwaukee"

In his 1922 history of the city, local publisher and civic booster William George Bruce described the cultural transformation of Milwaukee from what he called "*Alt*-Milwaukee," or "Old-Milwaukee," into a "typical American city" in the early decades of the twentieth century. "For many years, the impression has prevailed throughout the country that the city was intensely German in its ideals, customs and habits," he noted.[1] Milwaukee's high concentration of foreign-born German immigrants, prevailing German cultural institutions, and famous German-dominated brewing industry gave it a wide reputation as the "German Athens of America." However, Bruce argued, "Milwaukee had passed the zenith point of [its] Germandom. Its luster as the German Athens of America [has] waned."[2] Echoing melting pot theories of cultural assimilation that had gained greater traction in popular imagination at the time, Bruce argues that Milwaukee's Germans had gradually "melted" into American society over time and generations like other ethnic groups in cities throughout the United States. "The younger generation manifested tastes and desires that differed from those of their elders," he explained. "They preferred the negro minstrel show, the Irish comedian, and the American melodrama to the comedies and problem plays at the Stadt Theater. They began to play baseball, patronize boxing and wrestling matches, and admire a rough and tumble football contest."[3] Although their "intensely foreign" character made this a somewhat slower conversion than other ethnic groups,

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[1] William George Bruce, *History of Milwaukee, City and County*, vol. 1 (Milwaukee: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), 755.
[2] Ibid., 1:776.
[3] Ibid.

Bruce claimed, "The process of Americanization, unstimulated and unaided, had taken its natural, orderly, and logical course" in Milwaukee's German population.[4]

Repeatedly asserting their unwavering loyalty to the United States, however, Bruce's account suggested that the Americanness of Milwaukee's Germans was in question, and alluded to an assimilation process that was not as smooth or complete as he claimed. Published only five years after the United States entered the First World War, his affirmations of German-American patriotism responded indirectly to suspicions of their disloyalty that emerged in the anti-German hysteria that erupted in Milwaukee during the war. Eager to prove the devotion of "the most German city in America" to the nation's war effort against the ancestral homeland of many of its residents, civic boosters, city officials, the mainstream English language press (particularly the *Milwaukee Journal*), and new loyalty organizations waged their own war on Milwaukee's most prominent German cultural institutions and symbols. "Superpatriots" sowed fear among the city's Germans as they branded the use of German language as seditious, and intimidated residents into signing loyalty oaths and buying war bonds. German newspapers, organizations, schools, and families changed formats and Anglicized their names to avoid reprisals. Accused of having supported the German war effort, Milwaukee's iconic German brewing giants were also targeted through national prohibition legislation—instituted first as a wartime measure before it was ratified as a constitutional amendment in 1919.

While such attacks on Milwaukee's "Germandom" quickly subsided after the war, the wounds were certainly still fresh and severe as Bruce published his city history. In this context, this Americanization narrative offered an alternative understanding of the city's German cultural heritage that effectively countered past resentments and attempted to ease any lingering

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[4] Ibid., 1:755, 777.

anxieties. First, by claiming that Milwaukee's Germans had already assimilated as their second and third generations adopted more American lifestyles through the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, Bruce suggests that anti-German wartime hysteria was not only unjust, but superfluous. There was no need to question the loyalty of people who, by their love of baseball and Vaudeville, were already American. Second, and perhaps more importantly, Bruce claimed that, even though they were "intensely German in the observance of old world customs and habits," Milwaukee's Germans had always been exceptionally loyal Americans.[5] "While those of German birth remained German in their family life, fostering German social customs, reading German newspapers, attending German churches, and employing the German language in their social and business relations, they were also intensely American in their civic and political relations," Bruce maintained. "They espoused American patriotism as eloquently in the German language as it could ever be espoused in the English language."[6] Bruce thus portrays Milwaukee's historic Germanness as having been congruous with Americanness, and promotes a vision of a pluralistic American society where there was room in the national imaginary for the continued expression of ethnic identity—provided it agreed with the values and expectations of being American. By eagerly participating in electoral politics, enthusiastically celebrating Independence Day, and having "shed their blood freely for the preservation of the Union, and won high distinction for bravery and courage on the battlefield" during the Civil War, Bruce argues, German Milwaukeeans proved themselves as "loyal American citizen[s] without having discarded either [their] mother tongue, or [their] foreign customs and habits."[7] Such a devout

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[5] Ibid., 1:755.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 1:755–56.

loyalty earned German Milwaukeeans the right to hang on to some Old World traditions while melting into American society, he implies.

In his effort to redeem German Milwaukee after the war, Bruce effectively reframed the popular German Athens image of the city in terms of "Old Milwaukee" instead—a powerful schema that worked to retain the city's German cultural hegemony by claiming its ultimate transcendence into Americanness. According to Bruce, Milwaukee became a "progressive American city" as its residents became "submerged in a homogeneous people—an American people"—gradually shedding their suspect foreignness and conforming to the expectations and institutions of their adopted home. In the process, the prominent German cultural traditions and institutions that gave Milwaukee its reputation as the German Athens were increasingly abandoned, Bruce explained.[8] Enshrined in this narrative of loss, however, were nostalgic memories of the "good old days" in Old Milwaukee that celebrated the city's historic Germanness while lamenting its passing. For instance, Bruce recalled the old German Market on the corner of Water Street and Juneau Avenue, where "the good housewife" learned of the daily gossip while shopping for traditional German foods, replaced by the modern grocery store that featured a greater variety of more shelf-stable goods.[9] He also eulogized the city's many beer gardens and halls where German families, friends, and organizations gathered on weekends and holidays to drink beer, play games, and enjoy music in "picturesque reproductions of old world plays and pleasures," but had closed in the wake of prohibition.[10] On one hand, these nostalgic recollections ensured that the passing traditions and institutions of Milwaukee's historic Germanness had a place in the city's memory—conferring, as Bruce suggests, "the tribute which

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[8] Ibid., 1:781–86, 789.
[9] Ibid., 1:767–68.
[10] Ibid., 1:768–72.

is due them."[11] On the other hand, by depicting Germans and their descendants as having been exceptional citizens, essential to the development and character of the city, they also recommended a privileged place for Germanness (if only in memory) in Milwaukee's future as a modern American city. "The foreign born, who have contributed so much to the material, civic, and social development and growth of the city, … have left their impress, gave their labors, their virtues, their ideals, as a heritage to those who shall succeed them," Bruce asserts. Any remnants of the historic German Athens that survived the transformation were thus envisioned as monuments to Old Milwaukee— "reminder[s] that immigrant races once lived upon the soil we now occupy, and that they helped to build an American city."[12]

Yet, Bruce's project was not to provide a thorough rendering of German contributions to Milwaukee's history, but rather to promote a nostalgic vision of Germanness as a singular, unthreatening, and attractive cultural form that was essential to the character of the city. While he acknowledged the presence of German political radicals in Milwaukee's past—particularly those who fled the German states after the democratic revolution of 1848, commonly referred to as "Forty-Eighters"—Bruce painted these revolutionaries as "dreamers and idealists," and suggested that their yearnings for freedom were fulfilled on their arrival in the American republic. He offered no description of the prominent work of Milwaukee's German radicals and their descendants in ongoing social justice movements, especially in labor and women's rights, or any of the significant divisions within the community along lines of class, religion, and visions of political order. Alternatively, Bruce depicted the Americanization of Milwaukee's Germans as a distillation process that filtered good cultural forms from the bad. In becoming

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[11] Ibid., 1:789.
[12] Ibid.

American, Bruce claimed, "The advanced type of German-American readily accepted the better things found in American life and only retained the things in German life which he deemed worth retaining." Likewise, a pluralistic American society was not simply a receptacle for ethnic identities, absorbing cultural differences without question, but instead a sieve that carefully selected "the best in all the races that are merged into our body politic and our social life, and … combat[ed] the vicious and objectionable, be it of native or foreign origin."[13] While insisting on how little of a threat German Milwaukeeans were to the nation, Bruce's nostalgic recollections pointed to specific aspects of the city's historic Germanness that he contended were both acceptable to American society and instrumental to making Milwaukee a great American city: industrious and innovative entrepreneurship, political pragmatism, devotion to family and tradition, and the good-natured sociability of *gemütlichkeit*. Conversely, in minimizing or eliding the place of political radicalism and social conflict in the German Athens, Bruce effectively delineated what he deemed to be objectionable aspects of Germanness, rightfully rejected by the proverbial antibodies of Americanization.

To be sure, chroniclers and observers have interpreted Milwaukee's large and diverse German population as a cohesive ethnic community since the first immigrants from the then-un-unified German states settled in the frontier city in the 1830s and 1840s. This is most prominently evident in mid-to-late nineteenth century depictions of Milwaukee as the German Athens, which imagined the disparate experiences and cultural expressions of the city's Germans as a unified, coherent, and vibrant ethnic community—often regarded in singular terms as "*das Deutschtum*," or misrepresented as the "Dutch." Such uncomplicated celebrations of German culture and heritage remained strong into early twentieth century, particularly driven by the

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[13] Ibid., 1:780.

city's German brewing giants, Pabst, Schlitz, Blatz, and Miller, who competed for the patronage of local customers and visiting tourists with beer gardens, beer halls, restaurants, and saloons, often lavishly decorated in "Old-World" motifs. It was easy to imagine Milwaukee as a German city, as identifiably German names and cultural influences shaped much of the city's arts scene, education system, civic institutions, industrial economy, and politics, as well as its prominent architecture, monuments, and landscapes. Germans and their descendants certainly remained among the most significant power brokers in Milwaukee throughout this period and beyond. However, civic boosters and commentators, like Bruce, perceived a gradual weakening of German influence in the city as the number of foreign-born residents dramatically decreased and subsequent generations adopted more American lifestyles—hastened, of course, by anti-German sentiment during the First World War. These anxieties were further intensified as the steady expansion of mass industrialization attracted a larger, more ethnically and racially diverse workforce to the city through the early twentieth century, which made Milwaukee seem less German and more like a "typical American city." Moreover, Prohibition and the Great Depression posed significant threats to the city's prevailing order, rendering an entire industry and its many ancillary businesses idle, generating massive unemployment and industrial restructuring, and galvanizing support for organized labor and radical working-class politics.

Bruce's recollections of "Old Milwaukee" marked the beginning of a powerful effort to secure and reshape German hegemony in Milwaukee in the face of these changes. In the decades after the First World War, an array of civic boosters, businesses, historians, and cultural producers adopted this Old Milwaukee framework to promote the city, tell its history, and market its products to local and national audiences. Through their nostalgic stories and idyllic images, these agents celebrated German contributions to Milwaukee's development and the Old-World

cultural traditions and institutions that gave the city its historic reputation as the German Athens of America. Depicting Germanness as integral to the city's character at a time when the continued prevalence of German influence was in question, these renditions of Old Milwaukee effectively claimed a privileged place for German heritage in an increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-racial city. This did not necessarily constitute a rejection of more pluralist visions of Milwaukee and American society. In fact, such narratives often celebrated what Bruce described as "the accession of other races." In the time before commonly held distinctions between race and ethnicity, such references to race often meant other white ethnic groups.[14] For instance, in addition to a strong Polish population, Bruce notes, "The Irish, English, Scotch, Norwegian, Swede [sic], Danish, Bohemian, Austrian, Russian, Greek, Italian, Slavonian, Slovak, and Croatian races are [also] well represented." The overwhelming emphasis on Germans and their cultural contributions, however, suggested a desire to translate prevailing ethnic hierarchies into white ethnic privilege as the city became more diverse. This was further reinforced by the elision of the city's growing African American and Mexican communities from accounts of Milwaukee's expanding "racial" composition. Representations of Old Milwaukee also worked to reshape visions of the city's Germanness according to the prevailing expectations of white ethnicity. Typically emphasizing entrepreneurialism, Old-World craftsmanship, distinctive cultural elements and traditions (largely relating to beer, music, and food), and the sociability of *gemütlichkeit* over forms of political radicalism, social conflict, and militant nationalism, these depictions delineated "good" forms of Germanness from the "bad." By the time the United States entered the Second World War and later a Cold War with the Soviet Union, this framework had produced firm enough lines that questions of German Milwaukee's loyalty were negligible in

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[14] Ibid., 1:789.

comparison to the First World War. Nazi and communist influences at home and abroad could be easily interpreted as the work of "bad Germans," completely unrelated to Milwaukee's predominantly good, loyal German-American residents and businesses.

This chapter will explore the ways various cultural producers engaged narratives and imagery of Old Milwaukee to ensure claims to German ethnic hegemony and privilege as Milwaukee underwent significant transformations in the interwar years. As a project rooted in memory, such visions of Old Milwaukee were built on previous constructions of the city as the German Athens. This chapter will consider the threads of continuity and change in this transition—what cultural agents chose to include or exclude, emphasize or minimize in their depictions—which reveal shifting values and prevailing anxieties of Milwaukee's cultural elite as the city approached its centennial anniversary in 1946. German drinking culture, often understood as a key part of the city's reputation for *gemütlichkeit*, and the brewing industry had a prominent place in representations of Old Milwaukee. As Bruce's account illustrates, such narratives produced during Prohibition often portrayed the cessation of brewing and closure of beer gardens, halls, and saloons as a disastrous loss of ethnic culture and tradition, in addition to that of a major industry. Following Prohibition's repeal in 1933, these narratives portrayed the return of beer as a kind of return to Old Milwaukee—often supported with attempts to resurrect pre-Prohibition and Old-World institutions and traditions. Throughout this period, beer was a key channel for agents of Old Milwaukee to establish the positive cultural influences of Germanness in the city, particularly championing *gemütlichkeit* as an essential part of Milwaukee's distinctive character.

German Athens

Reflecting on the development of Milwaukee through the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the German writer Edmund Goes proclaimed, "It is certainly to be noted as a grand achievement of American energy and German struggle when in almost sixty years a city of 250,000 inhabitants could rise from a wilderness, from marsh and morass." Goes went on to describe the city's "Indian origins" as a historic location of native villages and sacred sites, as well as the introduction of the fur trade and later Yankee-Yorker settlement. Yet, Milwaukee truly emerged from its wilderness roots, Goes implied, as "a large number of Germans of the most varied professional rank settled in young Milwaukee." The budding frontier community became "The German City of America," he claimed, as they formed an influential majority and shaped the city's social and cultural development through the establishment of newspapers, theaters, art galleries, musical societies, social clubs, public library, museum, and German language schools. Originally published in the German journal, *Über Land und Meer*, in 1898, Goes' narrative also made its way to American readers as translations appeared in popular periodicals, like the weekly variety magazine, *The Chautauquan*, and the *New York Times*.[15] Such representations of Milwaukee as an exceptionally "German city" were nearly as old as the city itself, and permeated published and unpublished descriptions of the city throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century—including travel logs, letters from settlers and visitors home to family and friends, booster histories, promotional literature, and other documents circulated throughout the United States and Europe. Written at the end of the century, Goes' narrative would likely have only

[15] Edmund Goes, "Milwaukee, Die Deutsche Stadt Amerikas," *Über Land Und Meer* 80, no. 28 (1898): 446–47; Edmund Goes, "Milwaukee: The German City of America," *The Chautauquan* 27, no. 6 (September 1898): 659–61; "German Milwaukee," *New York Times*, September 18, 1898.

reaffirmed the city's reputation as the "German Athens of America" already established in the minds of many Germans and Americans.

Such boosterish celebrations of German contributions to Milwaukee's historic development are quite prevalent in the city's popular imagination to this day. However, the current and critical historiography of German Milwaukee's social migrations and interactions remains surprisingly limited. Several scholars have recently worked to help illuminate some of the key German political, religious, and cultural figures and influences in Milwaukee—particularly the city's "Forty-Eighters" and Socialists. Yet, Kathleen Neils Conzen's 1976 study of German immigrants in antebellum Milwaukee remains the most comprehensive analysis of Germans as an immigrant community in the city. As she explains, Germans were not the only group to establish a significant presence in the young city, but they were certainly the most prominent. Among the first migrants to settle the frontier community in the mid-to-late 1830s, Germans had already established a bourgeoning community there by the time the city was chartered in 1846.[16] "The Germans throughout the period remained the most numerous among the foreign born, followed by the Irish, the British, and other nationalities (largely Dutch, Canadians, Scandinavians, and other western and central Europeans)," Conzen notes.[17] By 1850, Germans had outnumbered even native-born residents, many whom were settlers from New York and New England who had initiated the city's founding and much of its early development.[18] The steady movement of Germans into Milwaukee continued through the remainder of the nineteenth century. By 1890, twenty-seven percent of the city's population were born in Germany, and sixty percent claimed to be of "German stock": German- or American-

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[16] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 17.
[17] Ibid., 15–16.
[18] Ibid., 17.

born with at least one German-born parent. Although the number of foreign-born Germans had dropped to nineteen percent by the turn of the century, those who claimed German heritage had risen to over seventy percent.[19]

A combination of factors contributed to the development of such a large German immigrant community in early Milwaukee. Poor harvests and growing urban industrialization increasingly disrupted the economic and social stability of rural German villages and towns, which induced large numbers of farmers, artisans, and merchants to leave their homes and pursue better opportunities in the United States.[20] Such motivations were magnified in the wake of a series of revolutions that spread through the kingdoms and principalities of the German Confederation in 1848 and 1849 as part of the larger European "Spring of Nations." Although they briefly succeeded in establishing a constitutional parliament in Frankfurt, the revolutions ultimately failed in their aspirations to replace the "ancien régime" with more democratic forms of government and unite the German kingdoms as a liberal nation-state. Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV forcefully suppressed the insurgency in Berlin, and provided military support to the other confederation states. Fleeing possible imprisonment and execution as the conservative regimes cracked down on liberal dissent in the following years, many revolutionaries and like-minded allies—so-called "Forty-Eighters"—found refuge in the democratic republic of the United States.[21] Although the 1848 revolutions did not immediately impact German migration to Milwaukee, as Conzen suggests, it likely contributed significantly to the exponential boom of the

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[19] Anthony M. Orum, *City-Building in America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 51; Steven Hoelscher, Jeffrey Zimmerman, and Timothy Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance Twice Told: Inventing and Recycling Landscapes in America's German Athens," in *Wisconsin Land and Life*, ed. Robert C. Ostergren and Thomas R. Vale (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 380–81.
[20] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 27–28.
[21] Alison Clark Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 27–32; Mischa Honeck, *We Are the Revolutionists: German-Speaking Immigrants and American Abolitionists After 1848* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 13–16.

city's German population after 1850.[22] We know very little about subsequent German political migrations to the city. However, later narratives indicate that German liberals, socialists, and other leftists continued to add to German Milwaukee's large numbers as they escaped imprisonment and military conscription in Bismarck's authoritarian regime after the unification of the German Empire in 1871.[23]

German settlement of Milwaukee was somewhat serendipitous. "The city's founding coincided with the beginnings of large scale European immigration, particularly from Ireland and Germany," Conzen notes. Milwaukee was "the entrepot of one of the latest areas to experience a land boom"—a promising place for new German migrants to establish their own farms and cultivate lucrative businesses in a "booming urban frontier."[24] Moreover, Milwaukee was geographically well situated near the end of many Great Lakes transportation lines, which were connected to New York—the main port of entry for European migrants—through the Erie Canal. Milwaukee became home to many German "stage migrants" who had previously settled elsewhere around the Great Lakes or the eastern seaboard before reestablishing themselves in Milwaukee.[25] Germans were also drawn to Milwaukee through active promotion. "By the 1840s, guidebooks, pamphlets, and published letters carried to Germany the message of Wisconsin's excellent soil, good transportation, healthy climate, light tax load, and inexpensive land," Conzen explains. Land speculators and civic boosters posted advertisements in German cities and in German-American newspapers, promoting the city to potential migrants. Milwaukee's German

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[22] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 28–29, 32–33.
[23] An example of this is in Ernest L. Meyer, *Bucket Boy: A Milwaukee Legend* (New York: Hastings House, 1947), 33–34. Meyer discusses his escape from German military conscription in 1880 after assaulting an officer. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), 222–23.
[24] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 22, 34.
[25] Ibid., 17.

settlers also reported back home individually, praising the city to family, friends, religious congregations, and other social networks. These booster narratives often "gave a great deal of attention to careful description of German life in [Milwaukee] and provided reasoned estimates of German chances of business success," Conzen claims.[26] And this attraction magnified over time. "As German settlement increased, [the prospective German emigrant] was presented … with the prospect of a rich social and cultural life and political participation, of an environment more German than American."[27] While several forces encouraged German mass migration to Milwaukee, such German boosterism laid an important foundation for the city's reputation as the German Athens.

Mass German migration indeed played an important part in shaping the city's development. "Germans settled in nearly every section of Milwaukee," local historian John Gurda asserts.[28] High concentrations of Germans particularly congregated on the city's north and west sides, facilitating much of the city's northwestern expansion through the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[29] The near north side, which contained several of the city's key German commercial, industrial, cultural, and leisure centers, was known colloquially as the "Wooden Shoe District"—reflecting an (inadvertent or intentional) Anglo-American misrepresentation of *Deutsch* as "Dutch."[30] Arriving with specialized trade skills and sufficient capital, several German settlers established businesses that served the needs of the immigrant community. Some of these entrepreneurs successfully expanded their ventures into significant industrial operations

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[26] Ibid., 35.
[27] Ibid., 36.
[28] Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 59.
[29] Ibid.
[30] John D. Buenker and Beverly J. K. Buenker, eds., *Milwaukee in the 1930s: A Federal Writers Project City Guide* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2016), 103–9.

that shaped the city's manufacturing economy—particularly in the brewing, malting, tanning, and machinery industries. Among these businesses were also German-language newspapers and publishing houses that served local and national German-American communities, and fostered a thriving community of German immigrant writers in the city.[31] Germans also formed "a wide range of organizations and institutions to meet the social needs of almost any group member."[32] German theaters, singing societies, orchestras, art schools, churches, Turner (gymnastics) societies, science academies, and other engagements not only fostered German communities, but also played important parts in developing Milwaukee's arts scene, educational systems, social spaces, and other aspects of the city's cultural landscape. Along the way, Germans and German culture also significantly shaped the city's built environment. The gothic steeples of German churches punctuated the skylines of Milwaukee's neighborhoods, the city's beer barons fashioned their plants, beer halls, and lavish homes in familiar Old-World styles, German beer gardens offered much-needed park space, and the German-born Milwaukee architect Henry Koch modeled his design for City Hall (built in 1895) after sixteenth- and seventeenth-century German *Rathäuser*.[33]

However, "German Milwaukee" was hardly homogeneous and cohesive. German migrants came from different regions and socio-economic conditions with different religious beliefs and political ideologies, which shaped their interactions and experiences in the city. "Germany" did not exist as a unified nation-state until the German Empire was established after

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[31] Peter C. Merrill, *German-American Urban Culture: Writers and Theaters in Early Milwaukee* (Madison: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2000), 7–22.
[32] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 154.
[33] Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," 380–84, 390–91; Susan K. Appel, "Building Milwaukee's Breweries: Pre-Prohibition Brewery Architecture in the Cream City," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 78, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 163–99; Joseph B. Walzer, "Suds and Solidarity: Outdoor Leisure Spaces and Working-Class Identities in Milwaukee, 1880-1925" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, 2009), 11–21.

the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. Before then, Conzen notes, "[it] was a term applied to some three dozen loosely allied states, not all of which were experiencing the same social changes at the same pace."[34] Migrants from the southwestern German states were among the first to settle Milwaukee in large numbers, and the origins of the city's Germans spread northeast over time along with the economic and social changes that prompted their departure.[35] As religion was closely related to place in the German states, such regional migrations often brought key religious divisions between (predominantly) southern German Catholics and northern German Lutherans.[36] Moreover, among the Forty-Eighters were several humanist intellectuals and Freethinkers who rejected institutionalized church authority. They established *Freie Gemeinden* (or "free congregations") in the city that offered regular lectures and intellectual debates, and published journals and newspapers, like *Der Humanist*.[37] While some German migrants arrived in Milwaukee with very little, others had sufficient capital to purchase land and start businesses. "Many of the city's Germans had never been peasants," Conzen explains. "They counted in their ranks representatives of Germany's urbanized and educated 'general estate'; their numbers encompassed also the lower middle class world of the urban artisan and shopkeeper and the petty bourgeoisie of the … home towns of Germany."[38] Political divisions among the German newcomers also shaped key debates as they became workers and employers in a budding industrial city and applied their ideological visions to their new home. Most notably, the Forty-Eighters became significant advocates for the Republican abolition movement in Milwaukee

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[34] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 27.
[35] Ibid., 27–28.
[36] Ibid., 29–31.
[37] Ibid., 178–79; Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 72.
[38] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 31–32, 154–55.

before and after the Civil War, and German socialists were important drivers of the city's labor movement and working class politics through the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[39]

Although certainly creating lines of internal fragmentation and conflict, such diversity in such a large and dense group of immigrants, Conzen argues, offered a more complete and secure community. In the commonly imagined American "immigrant experience," immigrant groups entered American society poor and marginalized, settled in central city slums, and gradually shed their "old world" ways as they adjusted to vastly different social forces in the United States—moving out of old immigrant ghettoes as they gained more social mobility and assimilated into American society.[40] Contrarily, Conzen argues, "The character and size of [German Milwaukee] … was sufficiently diverse to include both employers and employees, skilled and unskilled, cultured and unlettered; it could therefore supply its own leaders, provide for most of the needs of its members—economic, social, cultural—within its own bounds, and contain the upwardly mobile."[41] Developing their own independent avenues for social and economic advancement, a wide range of solidarity networks, and familiar cultural institutions, in other words, Milwaukee's German community created structures that insulated newcomers and eased their accommodation to American society—"encouraging only gradual acculturation and minimal structural assimilation."[42] There was no hurry for migrants to purposefully take on new American identities when they could, with little-to-no extra effort, successfully work, worship, socialize, and

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[39] Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era*; Anke Ortlepp, "Deutsch-Athen Revisited: Writing the History of Germans in Milwaukee," in *Perspectives on Milwaukee's Past*, ed. Margo Anderson and Victor Greene (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 110–11.
[40] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 6.
[41] Ibid., 225.
[42] Ibid., 2–5.

generally improve their lives entirely within a vast, autonomous, and familiar German community.[43]

Moreover, German diversity did not preclude expressions of cultural power and solidarity. This was perhaps most evident in the festive culture German immigrants developed in Milwaukee upon their arrival. The city's *Turnvereine* (gymnastic clubs) and *Sängerbünde* (singing societies), for instance, regularly held large local, regional, and national gatherings—*Turnfeste* and *Sängerfeste*—where participants exhibited their skills and celebrated their common interests.[44] A variety of German social clubs and voluntary associations organized celebrations marking religious and secular holidays of their current and former homes, including *Maifest* (the traditional German spring festival), American Independence Day, and the pre–Lenten Carnival.[45] Such organizations also staged festivals to commemorate the birthdays of significant German cultural figures, like poet-playwright-philosopher Friedrich Schiller and composer Ludwig van Beethoven.[46] Religious, cultural, and community groups also organized festivals as fundraisers for their organizational campaigns, the construction of new facilities, or the needs of community members. Milwaukee's German YMCA held festivals in the late 1870s to help raise funds to help their work assisting poor children in the city.[47] Festivity even seeped into the patterns of the regular workweek as families flocked to nearby beer gardens and taverns to socialize with friends and neighbors after church on Sunday afternoons. Many workers

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[43] Ibid., 226.
[44] Ibid., 180; Heike Bungert, "Demonstrating the Values of 'Gemütlichkeit' and 'Cultur': The Festivals of German Americans in Milwaukee, 1870-1910," in *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early Twentieth Century*, ed. Jürgen Heideking, Geneviève Fabre, and Kai Dreisbach (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 180–81; Greene, "Dealing with Diversity," 825.
[45] Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade," in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 58–59; Greene, "Dealing with Diversity," 825.
[46] Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture," 55–58.
[47] "German Y.M.C.A. to Give Program for Poor Children," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, December 18, 1876, 8.

traditionally followed such "ritualized German Sundays" with the observance of "Blue Monday" — a more relaxed workday that also often involved further public drinking.[48]

In their analyses of German festive culture, Conzen and Heike Bungert explain that such celebrations were important channels for Germans in both Europe and the United States to form and express a collective German nationalism and ethnic identity. Through the performance of shared rituals and pageantry, like mass assemblies, parades, dances, and other symbolic and celebratory customs, in a wide range of festive activities — from Sunday afternoon gatherings at beer gardens to weddings, funerals, associational gatherings, and holiday celebrations — Germans from different classes, religions, and regions imagined themselves as a unified people: a singular German "*Volk*" brought together through "*Volkfeste*." In the German Confederation of Central Europe, this process contributed to a growing vision of German nationhood, rooted in language, culture, and traditions, that helped people from disparate German kingdoms form a unified German nation in 1871. "When the German masses recreated in America accustomed and comforting forms of public celebrations," Conzen notes, "they were importing a vocabulary of celebration that spoke almost unthinkingly in nationalistic, and therefore ethnic, accents."[49] The rituals and pageantry of *Volkfeste* that German immigrants brought along with them provided a framework by which they and their descendants could form and belong to a unified German ethnic identity among people otherwise divided by their diverse class, religion, and political affiliations. However, this solidarity was often only temporary, and, aside from a few moments when nativism and temperance movements threatened German language and culture, it largely did not convert to ethnic political or social unity beyond the confines of the festivals themselves.

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[48] Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture," 58; Herbert George Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America*, repr. ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 37–39.
[49] Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture," 55-56.

After celebrating common Germanness on Sundays and holidays, Lutherans and Catholics, workers and employers, political elite and radicals often returned to their religious, class, and political divisions on Mondays.[50]

In her essay, "Phantom Landscapes of Colonization," Conzen suggests that, rather than the "diasporic imagination" of some European immigrant groups, such cultural transmissions reflected more of a "colonizing vision" behind German-American settlement. "Viewed from Germany, America until well into the nineteenth century was empty land," she explains. "Much of it was literally empty—wild land, uncultivated and therefore unclaimed, waiting to be baptized in German sweat. All of it was institutionally empty—no princes, little government, no state church, no feudal obligations, and little recognizable social hierarchy."[51] Although lacking the state-driven colonial programs of other European empires, Conzen argues, German peasants and artisans undertook their own colonization project, "seeking room to replicate an intensely local way of life" within in a rich and malleable American society.[52] "Whatever the realities and temptations of American society that they found upon landing," Conzen asserts, "it was the essential vision of the colonizer that drew them: the assumption that they carried the essence of their homeland with them, to reestablish it by right in better and purer form in the colonized land."[53] American westward expansion provided German immigrants with an extraordinary opportunity to stake their claim to "open" physical and cultural territory, thereby assuming their own kind of Manifest Destiny as they participated in the American imperial project. We might,

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[50] Ibid., 70-71.
[51] Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Phantom Landscapes of Colonization: Germans in the Making of a Pluralist America," in *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation Between Two Cultures, 1800-2000*, ed. Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 11.
[52] Ibid., 12.
[53] Ibid.

therefore, understand the development of a full and autonomous German community in a Midwestern city like Milwaukee as not only a successful settlement on the early northwestern frontier, but also an important nexus for the cultivation of an ongoing German colonial enterprise. Much like a colonial port, the familiar cultural institutions and networks German settlers established in Milwaukee helped foster a steady stream of their fellow migrants to either stay and further develop the settlement, or move on to form and settle other physical and cultural outposts.[54]

In this context, tales of German Milwaukee not only chronicled the formation of a uniquely large and dense German settlement, but claimed a commanding stake in the city's social order. In labeling Milwaukee "The German City of America," Goes explicitly articulated the German colonizing vision: Milwaukee was by all means American—another outpost in the national project of western expansion, and great industrial boomtown that quickly materialized from the wilderness like so many other cities along the resource-rich Great Lakes. To German settlers, however, the American frontier community simultaneously served as an outpost on an expanding German cultural frontier, offering a malleable socio-economic framework for the development of a German cultural hegemony. Much like a typical American civic boosterist history, German boosters like Goes documented important German "firsts," like the first German settler and the first German newspaper, and described the important contributions Germans made to the city's development, like establishing the city's public library, museum, and numerous civic organizations. In asserting that they had built such a significant part of Milwaukee's cultural and economic infrastructure, such depictions affirmed that Germans played a founding role in Milwaukee's formation and claimed a dominant place for Germans in the city's social order.

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[54] Ibid., 13-16.

Moreover, by broadcasting stories of Milwaukee's German cultural vibrancy throughout the United States and back home to Germany through articles like Goes' that were published in both the American and German press, such boosters firmly established the city's German reputation in a global social imaginary, and effectively drew more of their kinfolk and Germanophilic visitors to the city—thereby sustaining their colonial project.[55]

Such German booster narratives often referred to Milwaukee as the "German Athens of America." It is unclear precisely where and when this term, or its German form, *Deutsch-Athen*, was first used to describe Milwaukee as a German city. Many accounts cite the memoirs of Henry Villard, the German-American journalist, publisher, and railroad tycoon who had briefly worked as a bookseller in Milwaukee in 1856. "Milwaukee has always been an almost German city," Villard claimed. "It was known among German-Americans as '*Deutsch-Athen*,' and, comparatively speaking, deserved the name."[56] In his 1948 history of the city, however, Bayrd Still wrongly dates Villard's words at 1856, not 1900 when he wrote these memories of his time in Milwaukee in his memoirs.[57] Using Still as a reference, subsequent scholars have repeated this error.[58] An earlier reference to Milwaukee as the German Athens appeared in Rudolf Koss' 1871 German-language history of Milwaukee.[59] Neither Villard or Koss laid claim to coining the title, instead suggesting it had gained wide use within German migrant communities inside and outside of the city. Milwaukee's reputation as the German Athens was certainly further enhanced

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[55] Goes, "Milwaukee: The German City of America."
[56] Henry Villard, *Memoirs of Henry Villard, Journalist and Financier, 1835-1900*, vol. 1 (Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 48.
[57] Bayrd Still, *Milwaukee: The History of a City* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1948), 70; Villard, *Memoirs*, 1: v-vi.
[58] Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," pp. 380, 404, note 3; Timothy Bawden, "A Geographic Perspective on Nineteenth-Century German Immigration to Wisconsin," in *Wisconsin German Land and Life*, ed. Heike Bungert, Cora Lee Kluge, and Robert C. Ostergren (Madison: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2006), p. 83, note 15.
[59] Rudolf A. Koss, *Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Herold, 1871), 259, 291.

as such characterizations were broadcast and reproduced through the publication of travel narratives and cultural analyses that spread through transnational information networks. Koss' use of the title, for instance, was later referenced in an 1874 German booklet describing the social and political conditions of Germans in the United States, which was, in turn, later translated and republished in an 1884 edition of the British freethinker journal, *Our Corner*.[60]

Regardless of when it first appeared, characterizations of Milwaukee as German Athens tapped into well-established "contributionist" narrative structures. The term "Athens" suggested a commitment to the tenets of nineteenth century liberal democracy that claimed origins in classical republican philosophy of Ancient Greece. In labelling Milwaukee a German Athens, boosters celebrated the city as a haven for the social and political visions of German nationalist liberalism—most likely referring to the impact of the Forty-Eighters on local and national issues. Yet, notions of German political power emerged in booster narratives even before the Forty-Eighters arrived in the city. In his 1847 survey of the *History and Conditions of the Germans in America*, for instance, published only one year after the city's charter, German scholar Franz von Löher observed, "Among the Germans in Milwaukee a very active life has developed. … Nowhere have the Germans decided so much in political matters as here."[61] Such notions affirmed German colonizing visions, promoting the contributions of German liberalism and later socialism to building a constructive political landscape in the social wilderness of frontier Milwaukee.

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[60] E. Schlaeger, *Die Sociale Und Politische Stellung Der Deutschen in Den Vereinigten Staaten: Ein Beitrag Zu Der Geschichte Des Deutsch-Amerikanerthums Der Letzten 25 Jahre* (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1874), 11–12; Dr. Schlaeger, "The Social and Political Position of the Germans in the United States," trans. Miss Coleman, *Our Corner* 3 (1884): 364.

[61] Franz Löher, *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika* (Cincinnati: Eggers und Wulkop; Leipzig: K.F. Köhler, 1847), 345; Kate Asaphine Everest, *How Wisconsin Came by Its Large German Element* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1892), 27.

However, German Athens narratives were most often dedicated to celebrations of German cultural formations. "Many social experts attribute this marvel [of Milwaukee's Germanness] to the influence of German music," German scholars Moritz Wagner and Carl Scherzer noted in their 1854 work, *Travels in North America*. "Despite all the obstacles, a music society consisting entirely of German dilettantes had blossomed in Milwaukee as nowhere else in the West. Chance has brought good men together."[62] Similarly, in her 1892 analysis of the Wisconsin's German communities, Kate Asaphine Everest asserted, "The social and musical life of Milwaukee among the Germans, which gave it the name of the 'German Athens,' made the city well known among Germans in Europe and America." As she recalled, "Some Germans of considerable musical ability early came [sic] to Milwaukee," and formed musical societies, including a *Männer Gesang Quartet* (men's vocal quartet), an *Allgemeinen Deutschen Gesangverein* (German community chorus), and an instrumental *Musikverein* that performed the works of major German composers under the direction of the well-known Viennese conductor and Forty-Eighter, Hans Balakta. "Thus, Milwaukee gained a reputation, even in its pioneer stage, for musical ability," Everest claimed. Likewise citing Balatka's influence in his Milwaukee memories, Henry Villard claimed, "Good orchestral and vocal music was more liberally provided for [in Milwaukee] than in any other city in the West. There was also a very good German theatre," he added.[63]

Representations of Milwaukee as the German Athens typically emphasized the contributions of these organizations and institutions to the formation of a German cultural hegemony in the city. This was most often referred to as a prevailing sense of *gemütlichkeit*—

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[62] Wagner and Scherzer, *Reisen in Nordamerika*, 2:116–17; Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 172.
[63] Villard, *Memoirs*, 1:48–49.

referring both to feelings of social congeniality and German festive cultural unity. "Milwaukee is perhaps the only one of all of North America's larger cities that has a good deal of that *gemütlich*-German character, which is not even in Cincinnati and St. Louis, where the Germans, despite their larger numbers, are more divided and have followed the American way of life more closely," Wagner and Scherzer observed in their travel log. Implying that such cultural transmissions were part of a kind of German-American civilizing mission, they assert, "This *gemütlich* character shines everywhere, giving the physiognomy of the city itself a friendly and comfortable air, and has even infected American society, whose stiff and icy tome has thawed a little under the influence of German customs."[64] Similarly suggesting a colonizing project behind German Athens, Rudolf Koss claimed that German immigrant artists, like Henry Vianden, "who had ventured to carry the higher creations of art into the still very poor West, was greeted [in Milwaukee] with joy," and became "the pioneers of the German-Athens."[65] Moreover, such cultural representations largely superseded descriptions of more radical German political influences in the city. Before referring rather abstractly to the German impact on the frontier community's politics, Franz Löher insisted, "Nowhere are there such joyous balls."[66] Everest proclaimed, "Amateur theaters, literary societies, political clubs, military companies, and a refined society, gave [Milwaukee] the tome of a German city. There to some extent the dreams of patriots were realized," she suggested, offering no impression of any dreams such German "patriots" may have had of forming a more democratic and egalitarian society in their new home.[67]

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[64] Wagner and Scherzer, *Reisen in Nordamerika*, 2:116–17; Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 172.
[65] Koss, *Milwaukee*, 291.
[66] Löher, *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika*, 345; Everest, *How Wisconsin Came by Its Large German Element*, 27.
[67] Everest, *How Wisconsin Came by Its Large German Element*, 27.

Although the name "German Athens" suggested the formation of a kind of independent German utopia in Milwaukee, such narratives delineated priorities and limitations of the German colonizing vision that translated very well into existing American racial and class hierarchies. The cultural boosterism expressed in representations of Milwaukee as the German Athens supported visions of Germanness as "a language, a neighborhood, a set of associations within which friends were found, a way of enjoying life."[68] While Germans built ethnic community solidarity through the performances of festive culture, German Athens narratives affirmed music, art, theater, food, drink, and other cultural forms as the primary channels of German ethnic identity formation and expression. These visions "accompanied rather than precluded Americanization," Conzen suggests, as Germans worked to carve their place into broader American social structures.[69] As German entrepreneurs, artists, journalists, musicians, and other cultural producers participated in Milwaukee's early development, they increasingly joined the ranks of the city's key power brokers over time. The chronicling of their contributions in German Athens narratives not only articulated a German colonizing vision, but also aligned this vision with American urban-industrial power structures. German leftist intellectuals and activists similarly linked their ideologies to local and national American social and political issues—namely the abolition, labor, and women's rights movements. However, as some German Athens narratives minimized or elided their contributions in favor of more neutral-seeming cultural forms of art and *gemütlichkeit*, they effectively disconnected German ethnic identity from more insurgent political leanings of many members of the community. The ethnic boosterism of German Athens narratives thus closely adhered to the conventions of American civic boosterism,

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[68] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 227.
[69] Ibid.

celebrating the rise of a great city from wilderness through the hard work of a few enterprising and savvy men. This provided an important foundation for the future imagination of "Old Milwaukee." On one hand, German boosterist representations reassured their American neighbors that Germans were valuable and productive members of American society, and German cultural hegemony in Milwaukee was ultimately benign. On the other hand, their insistence on the exceptional cultural contributions Germans made to Milwaukee's development claimed a privileged place in the American social hierarchy.

"The Structure of Society"

American entry into the First World War in April 1917 plunged Milwaukee's German culture into crisis as so-called "superpatriots" questioned the loyalty of the city's large German population. "The hate was not directed alone against people, but against the German language, the German name, and German music and literature," Milwaukee lawyer Edwin J. Gross recalled.[70] Gross cited one instance when he had ordered "German fried potatoes" at a local diner after the U.S. had declared war on Germany. "The waiter, in an insulting tone, told me that he couldn't serve me any German fried potatoes, that all he could give me were Liberty fried potatoes," he remembered. "Since there was no difference in what I wanted I finally bowed to his demand and had German fried potatoes under a new and patriotic title."[71] Such incidents ranged in severity. For instance, a Canadian army recruitment officer who was posted in an office across from the Brumder Publishing house led an effort that forced the company to remove a gold statue of the nationalist figure, "Germania," from the front of the building. On another occasion, a

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[70] Edwin J. Gross, "Public Hysteria: First World War Variety," *Historical Messenger* 17, no. 2 (June 1961): 2–3.
[71] Ibid., 3.

crowd of wartime Germanophobes, armed with a machine gun, barricaded the Pabst Theater to prevent a performance of Friedrich Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*. Moreover, the Loyalty Legion, a privately organized group who had empowered themselves with the responsibility to prevent seditious activity in Milwaukee, successfully lobbied for the removal of references to the city's reputation as the German Athens in guidebooks and other promotional literature.[72]

While superpatriots were undoubtedly extreme and narrow-minded in their attacks on German people and cultural institutions, their claims that German Milwaukeeans harbored sympathies for the German war effort were not entirely unfounded. "As the most German city in America," Gurda notes, "Milwaukee became a principle center of support for Kaiser Wilhelm II and his expansionist German Empire—even after U-boats sank the Lusitania, with the loss of 128 American lives, on May 7, 1915."[73] Indeed, Milwaukee became the hub of the Wisconsin German-American Alliance, among the largest branches of the National Alliance, who lobbied for local support for the German war effort, and protested the Anglophilic policies of the Wilson administration and major American financiers. In March 1916, the Alliance hosted a charity bazaar at the Milwaukee Auditorium that raised nearly $150,000 for German and Austrian war relief. Around 175,000 people attended the week-long event, which featured replicas of a Viennese café, Nuremberg village square, Biedermeier-style garden, the candy cottage from "Hansel and Gretel," and a German war trench, as well as German musical concerts and vaudeville acts.[74] Moreover, Milwaukee's German socialists organized a strong anti-war movement in the city, which became a significant channel for the city's Germans to continue

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[72] Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," 391–93; Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 225.
[73] Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 222.
[74] Ibid., 222–23; Still, *Milwaukee*, 455–56; Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," 392.

expressing their opposition to the war. In the elections of 1918, Milwaukeeans elected several socialists to city and county council seats, reelected Daniel Hoan as mayor, and elected Victor Berger to Congress. The House refused Berger his seat after he was convicted under the Espionage Act in 1919 for using the U.S. mail to distribute "seditious material" in his socialist newspaper, the *Milwaukee Leader*. When the state held a special election to fill the empty seat, Milwaukee voters defiantly elected Berger again. The Hoan administration and some German booster groups attempted to repaint the city's Germanness more patriotically after the U.S. entered the war on the side of the Allies, supporting demonstrations of the city's wartime "preparedness." However, German Milwaukee had already publicly and enthusiastically aligned itself against an Allied-American coalition against their ancestral homeland—thus opening the door for superpatriots to challenge German hegemony in the city.[75]

However, the endurance of German cultural hegemony in Milwaukee was seemingly at stake well before the war. Looking back on his experience in Milwaukee in the 1850s at the turn of the century, Henry Villard recalled, "The preponderance of the German element was even greater than at present; in fact, its Americanization, which has in the meantime progressed very rapidly, had then hardly begun."[76] Indeed, several of the city's German cultural institutions had changed or disappeared over time as subsequent generations of German-Americans acclimated more to American mass-culture and consumerism. This may have been most evident in the fate of the city's traditional German beer gardens. Often assumed to have met their demise with the onset of National Prohibition in 1920, beer gardens underwent key economic and cultural transformations in previous decades. As significant local outlets for summer beer drinking,

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[75] Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 223–31.
[76] Villard, *Memoirs*, 1:48.

Milwaukee's brewing giants purchased the city's main gardens and poured a significant amount of capital into producing lavish attractions that would draw ever-larger crowds of customers from throughout the city and visitors from out of town. As demand grew for Coney Island-style rides and games among young working-class patrons in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, brewers gradually turned these traditional German institutions into important sites of American mass amusement, with roller coasters, dance halls, Ferris wheels, and other popular attractions. Meanwhile, many of the smaller nineteenth century neighborhood gardens that competed with newer, larger amusement parks closed their gates. To some German observers, like Villard and Bruce, such forms of Americanization represented a weakening of the city's German cultural influence. While these updated gardens often maintained many traditional German features, including brass band concerts, German dances and songs, and old-world aesthetics in its buildings and grounds, Germanness was no longer central to the beer garden's institutional identity in Milwaukee.[77]

German Americanization accompanied other key changes in Milwaukee's socio-economic landscape before and after the First World War. "The generation from 1910 to 1940 saw the realization of mature cityhood at the mouth of the Milwaukee [River]," Bayrd Still asserted in his 1948 city history. "On the foundation of city builders' dreams and speculators' ambitions there stood by 1940 a metropolis which could count 587,472 persons within the city limits and nearly half again as many in the wider area over which its metropolitan influence held sway."[78] The city's early twentieth century metropolitan "maturity" was largely associated with massive industrial growth. Milwaukee's major industries steadily expanded their operations and

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[77] Walzer, "Suds and Solidarity"; Joseph B. Walzer, "*Gemütlichkeit* on the Midway: German Culture at Milwaukee's Turn-of-the-Century Amusement Parks," *Milwaukee County History* 1, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 51–59.
[78] Still, *Milwaukee*, 433.

adopted new mass-production and scientific management systems as they entered larger national and global markets. Several of the city's major industries benefitted immensely from contracts with the warring powers of Europe and the United States military during the First World War—particularly the machinery, tanning, and meatpacking industries. So, while the war brought crisis to cultural Germanness, it also awarded tremendous gains to some of the city's manufacturers of German heritage, like Pawling & Harnischfeger and Pfister & Vogel.[79] While generally a period of monumental progress, Milwaukee's early-twentieth-century industrialization also encountered significant challenges. National Prohibition severely wounded the city's iconic brewing industry and its many ancillary businesses—some of which managed to stay afloat by selling off land and assets and introducing new lines of production. Although the city's diversity absorbed the early impact of the 1929 stock market crash, giving some city officials and business leaders optimism that Milwaukee might avoid the Great Depression altogether, the city ultimately experienced the massive unemployment crisis that plagued other American industrial centers in the 1930s as "the number of wage-earners in Milwaukee County plummeted from 117,658 in 1929 to 66,010 in 1933," and "the sum total of wages paid … dropped 64.6 percent during the same four-year period." As Gurda notes, "Milwaukee's [employment and production] numbers were roughly ten percentage points worse than those for the nation as a whole."[80]

Mass industrialization also brought significant demographic changes to the city. Seeking new economic opportunities in factory work, increasing numbers of "new immigrants" from Southern and Eastern Europe, Mexico, and African Americans migrants from the South moved into the central city and neighborhoods surrounding major plants. Although Germans remained a

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[79] John D. Buenker, "Preface," in *Milwaukee in the 1930s: A Federal Writers Project City Guide*, ed. John D. Buenker and Beverly J. K. Buenker (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2016), xxxi.
[80] Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 277–78; Orum, *City-Building in America*, 102–3.

significant part of Milwaukee's large foreign-born population into the 1940s, recent Polish, Italian, Russian, and other European immigrants established a prominent presence in the city, as well. In many ways, these newcomers followed the path forged by German Milwaukeeans, purchasing homes, establishing their own commercial centers, churches, and community organizations in large ethnic enclaves throughout the city, and collectively working to advance their interests in the city's socio-economic order.[81] Drawn largely by labor shortages in the leather industry, Mexican migrants came to Milwaukee in large numbers following the First World War—settling primarily in Walker's Point and other neighborhoods of the city's near south side.[82] As Joe Trotter reveals, war work also drew increasing numbers of African American migrants from southern states who "found employment in difficult, low-paying, and generally disagreeable jobs in four major industrial groups: iron and steel; slaughtering and meat-packing; tanneries; and building and construction."[83] While living among recent Eastern European Jewish immigrants, Milwaukee's early twentieth century black migrants were segregated in the city's near north side—the historic center of nineteenth century German settlement—known within the community as "Bronzeville," and more broadly among white Milwaukeeans as the "Sixth Ward," "Little Africa," and other, more disparaging names.[84]

Milwaukee's entry into urban-industrial "maturity" also brought significant problems. Failing to sufficiently expand its borders to accommodate the rapid influx of industrial migrants, the city became increasingly overcrowded. Although Milwaukee largely remained a "city of

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[81] Barrett, *The Irish Way*.
[82] Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 89–91.
[83] Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-45*, 2nd edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 47.
[84] Ibid., 21–24; Jones, *The Selma of the North*, 19.

houses" with "no definite tenement district," tenement-like conditions became quite prevalent as workers and their families packed into houses that were subdivided into "flats" and basement units, with as many as three houses crowded onto a small city lot. In 1910, according to Still, the field secretary of the Russell Sage Foundation declared Milwaukee "one of the worst cities in its control of the housing problem."[85] Such density and poor housing especially overwhelmed the city's meager sanitation systems, allowing for infectious diseases like smallpox, cholera, tuberculosis, diphtheria, and other health problems to flourish.[86] Some also worried that overcrowding and a lack of wholesome play spaces and adequate educational institutions contributed to a rise in juvenile delinquency, thereby undermining the chances of cultivating a productive workforce and citizenry in future generations. These conditions developed unevenly across the city's landscape, increasingly stratified along lines of race and class. Many more upwardly mobile "old stock" immigrants, like Germans, were able to escape overcrowded and deteriorating central city neighborhoods for newer housing and healthier environments on the outskirts of town, leaving "new immigrants" and racial "others" behind in the old city slums.[87]

As it experienced major changes in the structure of its social order and worked to address growing problems that came with "big cityhood," Milwaukee developed what Zona Gale called a "civic self-consciousness," or what Still termed a "municipal conscience."[88] Middle-class progressive reformers and socialist politicians led campaigns to expand and update city borders, municipal infrastructure, sanitation systems, public housing, social services, and municipal

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[85] Still, *Milwaukee*, 389.
[86] Judith Walzer Leavitt, *The Healthiest City: Milwaukee and the Politics of Health Reform* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 22–25; Still, *Milwaukee*, 389–90; Kate Foss-Mollan, *Hard Water: Politics and Water Supply in Milwaukee, 1870-1995* (West Lafayette, I.N.: Purdue University Press, 2001), 84–85.
[87] Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).
[88] Still, *Milwaukee*, 258, 356–57.

reforms—especially to benefit poor and working-class neighborhoods. Such efforts earned the city's socialist administrations the nickname "Sewer Socialists." Although Milwaukee had a long tradition of working-class radicalism and socialist politics, support for these movements grew tremendously with early twentieth century industrial expansion. As the labor movement organized working-class solidarity to pressure employers for fair wages, hours, and working conditions, the Milwaukee socialists promised to extend these drives beyond the shop floor—building a municipal working class solidarity to challenge the existing pro-business municipal order and improve the living conditions of workers and their families at home. In working to address municipal problems as class issues, Milwaukee's socialists and progressive reformers advanced a civic working-class politics that in many ways superseded ethnic politics. Divisions between Germans, Poles, and Italians, or white ethnic Europeans, Latinx, and African-Americans, remained quite prevalent. However, municipal reformers offered new access (at least rhetorically) to municipal services and systems across not only class, but also ethnic and racial lines. In the process, Milwaukee Socialists and Progressives also promoted more cosmopolitan visions of a pluralistic civic society. New social centers established in working-class neighborhoods encouraged cross-community interactions, and offered opportunities for immigrants and their descendants to share the traditional foods, costumes, songs, and dances of their ancestral homelands. While often favoring strength in numbers, such encounters challenged long-established ethnic hierarchies as social center organizers treated different cultural expressions equally.

To some, however, the rise of a more cosmopolitan civic self-consciousness meant a loss of Milwaukee's distinctive German identity. "Milwaukee residents in 1940 have difficulty in directing out-of-town guests who want to see the 'real old German Milwaukee' they have read

about," the Federal Writer's Project's (FWP) Milwaukee City Guide claimed. While German traditions remained common in certain parts of the city, German language and cultural institutions were not as overtly dominant as they once were. "The more facetious out-of-towners sometimes ask jovially, '*Sprechen Sie Deutsch*?' and the Milwaukeean, patiently falling in with the guest's humor, can generally muster in reply a '*Ja was willst du haben*?,'" the FWP guide continued. "The visitor may be happily unaware that the accent is atrocious and that the German phrase itself is one of a scant half-dozen in the speaker's vocabulary."[89] As the FWP guide suggests, this was particularly a problem for the city's tourist industry. Certainly secondary to manufacturing in the early twentieth century, Milwaukee's entertainment economy emerged from nineteenth century German festive culture. As Milwaukee's reputation as the German Athens spread, visitors in town for business or pleasure flocked to the city's breweries, beer gardens, beer halls, restaurants, hotels, theaters, and other "famous places"—largely developed by the brewing industry—to experience the *gemütlichkeit* they had heard so much about. The prospect of Milwaukee becoming a more diverse city, just like any other major American metropolis, threatened an industry that relied heavily on maintaining the city's distinctive German identity.

Perhaps more important, yet less overt, was the potential threat such pluralism posed to the privileged place of Germanness in the city's existing ethnic social order. As Still argued, "The very existence of Czerwinskis, Spicuzzas, Kusiks, Grosses, and Novaks suggested that the nationality pattern of twentieth century Milwaukee was to be even more variegated and complex than that of the combined *Deutsch-Athen* and Yankee town of the nineteenth."[90] As Still

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[89] Buenker and Buenker, *Milwaukee in the 1930s: A Federal Writers Project City Guide*, 8.
[90] Still, *Milwaukee*, 278.

suggests, German cultural influence became increasingly diluted as other migrant groups entered the city and became more acclimated to the expectations of American industrial society. Meanwhile, Germanness became an ethnicity among a city of many ethnicities as German cultural groups displayed their cultural traditions alongside their Polish, Italian, and Russian neighbors. No longer the dominant colonial cultural outpost it once was, the German colonial project in Milwaukee appeared to have ended.

"Old Milwaukee"

Wartime anti-German hysteria and growing anxiety about weakening German influence generated new desires among German Milwaukeeans to advance their culture, and secure German hegemony in the city's expanding ethnic hierarchy. As Dieter Berninger explains, new cultural groups emerged in the early 1930s to organize concerted efforts to promote Germanness in the city. Formed in late 1932, the Wisconsin Federation of German-American Societies, for instance, sought to "support and encourage German-American cultural events, strengthen the German language, publicize the activities of member and other societies, and to represent and safeguard the rights and status of the German-American community in Milwaukee and Wisconsin."[91] Most prominently, the Federation sponsored an annual *Deutscher Tag* (German Day) celebration every summer—notably not in accordance with the national German-American Day observed in October—which regularly drew tens of thousands of Milwaukeeans to its large parade, speeches, picnic, music, and dance at Washington Park.[92] The rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany prompted some of Milwaukee's Germans to understand these cultural

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[91] Dieter Berninger, "Milwaukee's German-American Community and the Nazi Challenge of the 1930's," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 71, no. 2 (Winter, 1987-1988): 121.
[92] Ibid., 123.

advancement efforts as part of the larger German Third Reich project. Organized in 1933, the pro-Nazi German-American Volksbund (commonly known as the Bund) worked to advance the ideals of National Socialism in the city's German community and organize political support for the "new Germany." In 1937, the Bund established Camp Hindenburg, a youth summer camp, parade ground, and paramilitary training facility along the Milwaukee River in Grafton—a small farming community just north of Milwaukee.

Although the Bund and Federation both sought to organize German ethnic solidarity and promote German culture in Milwaukee, major divisions emerged over the ideologies and policies of National Socialism and visions of German nationalism in the United States. With memories of anti-German hysteria still quite fresh, the Federation imagined itself as strictly a cultural advancement organization—consciously or unconsciously distancing itself from political issues that might renew questions of German-American loyalty. However, as Berninger notes, "The Bund openly challenged the concept of an apolitical German-American organization, arguing that it was inappropriate for the Federation *not* to involve itself in political affairs or to be supportive of the Third Reich."[93] The Bund's attempt to coopt the Federation's agenda came to a head in 1935 when Federation delegates debated whether the swastika should be displayed as the German national flag in the year's German-American Day festivities. The Federation resisted the Bund's plans, voting twenty-seven to fourteen against the use of the swastika, and then expelled Bund president George Froboese from the meeting for being disruptive—prompting other Bund members to walk out in protest.[94] Anti-Nazi sentiment strengthened in the city's German community as news spread of Nazi authoritarianism and oppression in their ancestral homeland,

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[93] Ibid., 127.
[94] Ibid., 128.

and another European war seemed inevitable. The Federation openly denounced the Bund in 1938, and, in 1939, successfully took over the Bund's lease for Camp Hindenburg, which they renamed Carl Schurz Park after the famous Milwaukee Forty-Eighter and founder of the German-American Turner movement.[95] The Bund officially disbanded after the United States entered the Second World War in December 1941, and, as the war progressed, several Milwaukee Nazi sympathizers faced deportation proceedings. Bund president Froboese committed suicide while on his way to testify before a federal grand jury in New York in 1942.[96] By contrast, a version of the Federation exists to this day as the non-profit German-American Societies of Milwaukee, Inc.

While not necessarily associated with the work of the German-American Federation or its members, Old Milwaukee narratives embodied similar desires to restore a sense of German influence in the city without challenging Americanness. In the period leading up to and during the Second World War, civic boosters, historians, journalists, businesses, and other cultural producers reframed Milwaukee's German identity to accommodate its changing social landscape, and presented German culture as an essential and unthreatening asset to the city's unique, "Old World" character. Such Old Milwaukee narratives fondly recalled the city's historic reputation as the German Athens of America, and nostalgically remembered the people, events, places, and cultural traditions—both remarkable and ordinary—that helped produce it. Where German Athens narratives of the nineteenth century imagined Milwaukee as an inherently German city, however, representations of Old Milwaukee characterized it as an American city built by Germans. Old Milwaukee narrators still portrayed Germans as having played a special

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[95] Ibid., 132, 139.
[96] Ibid., 140; "Bund Leader Ends His Life Beneath Train," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1942, sec. 1, p. 1.

role in developing the city. But, instead of envisioning Milwaukee as a German colonial project, they described it as a great, modern, multi-cultural American city in which a commanding majority were of German origin. To purveyors of Old Milwaukee, the city's Americanness was unquestionable as it worked its way into a modern industrial metropolis. However, lingering German beer, food, music, dancing, and feelings of *gemütlichkeit*, they argued, gave Milwaukee a distinctly Old World, Teutonic "flavor." As the United States faced another war with Germany and Cold War with the Soviet bloc, these nostalgic representations communicated the white-ethnic expectations of Milwaukee's Germanness. In celebrating the entrepreneurship, hard work, and especially festive culture of the city's German heritage, Old Milwaukee narratives effectively delineated "good" forms of Germanness from the political radicalism (on the left) and militant nationalism (on the right) of the "bad." Old Milwaukee narratives portrayed a city proud of its German heritage, that knew how to work hard and play hard in a German way—but not in the vein of their Nazi or Communist kinfolk in Europe. Rather, Milwaukee was a blue-collar, yet capitalist, American city raised by the bootstraps of its German immigrant forebears.

Bruce refined his "Old Milwaukee" vision in a 1944 article by that title in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*. Much like in his 1922 city history, Bruce surveys the city's history from the establishment of Solomon Juneau's trading posts in 1818 to the First World War, particularly emphasizing the major contributions Germans played in the city's development. Moreover, like his affirmations of German loyalty after the First World War, Bruce's article, published at the height of the Second World War, also emphasizes that Milwaukee's Germans embodied the essence of Americanness. When describing the resistance of German intellectuals who migrated to the city after the 1848 German revolution to the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic Know Nothing movement, for instance, Bruce claims, "They pointed with assurance to the Constitution of the

United States which granted to the foreign born the same rights of citizenship that were accorded to the native born." Bruce also suggests that many seemingly ubiquitous Milwaukee cultural institutions were of German origin, and proved valuable to German immigrant transitions from the Old World to new. "The German *Bierwirthschaft*, or tavern, soon became a popular institution with the immigrants," Bruce explained. "Here they learned something of New World democracy, and the class distinctions of an Old World were unknown. The peasant and mechanic enjoyed the same respect that was accorded to the merchant and the professional man."[97] At the same time, Bruce distilled Milwaukee's Germanness down to an unthreatening, but distinctive cultural form. While their kinfolk subscribed to militant nationalism that gave rise to the Nazi regime in Germany, "the German immigrant [in Milwaukee]… sang German songs, read German newspapers, ate German cooking, drank beer and wine, danced German waltzes, and said his prayers in German."[98] Although they shared an ancestral home, in other words, to Bruce, Milwaukee's Germans embodied a far more appealing and accommodating form of Germanness than that of the Germans that American soldiers were fighting in Europe.

Moreover, by adding the history of everyday life experiences in Milwaukee to the booster framework of nineteenth century German Athens narratives, Bruce also helped set the tone for what elements of the city's past would comprise the ongoing (re)imagination of Old Milwaukee. Memories of the city's built environment and material culture especially emerged as important components of Bruce's vision. For instance, Bruce describes the changing seasonal pantry of the German *Hausfrau*, the antiquated profession of the yeast peddler, or *Hefe-Mattes*, "who went from back door to back door to sell liquid yeast in units of half pints and pints at a nominal

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[97] William George Bruce, "Old Milwaukee," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 27, no. 3 (March 1944): 298.
[98] Bruce, "Old Milwaukee," 298.

price," German cultural leisure spaces, like various long-gone beer gardens, and discontinued German festivals, like *Saengerfeste*, *Turnfeste*, and *Schutzenfeste*.[99] Bruce paints a fond, yet somewhat critical portrait of common laborers, like the wood sawyers that "assembled about the old City Hall ready to hire out to anyone who wanted his cordwood sawed and split." While acknowledging that they were "useful men," Bruce also recounts, "It was said that when they were well supplied with rye bread and bacon, they were not so anxious to accept wood-sawing jobs. Tradition has it that they clustered on the shady side of the City Hall in the summer time and on the sunny side in the winter, and that through these changes the City Hall was moved from its foundation several inches every season."[100] By contrast, Bruce celebrates the entrepreneurialism of business owners, like "the German immigrant barber who established himself in the New World [as] a jack-of-all-trades." Bruce noted, "Aside from his abilities as a hair cutter and face scraper (*Haarschneider und Rasirer*), he was also something of a dentist, a chiropodist, and a quasi surgeon. His shop window announced to the public that he was accomplished in pulling teeth (*zahnausziehen*), drawing blood (*schröpfen*), applying leeches (*blutegelsetzen*), and as a chiropodist (*Hühneraugen Operateur*)."[101]

In reimagining the city's Germanness as Old Milwaukee between his 1922 and 1944 pieces, Bruce helped construct a framework that other cultural agents and civic boosters picked up and ran with. The city's brewers had a particularly important stake in these new visions of Old Milwaukee. The repeal of National Prohibition in 1933 meant the potential restoration of both a powerful industry in the city's economy, and cultural institutions central to the city's identity. However, the "dry decade," social changes in the city, and lingering questions of

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[99] Bruce, "Old Milwaukee," 300.
[100] Bruce, "Old Milwaukee," 299-300.
[101] Bruce, "Old Milwaukee," 300.

German-American loyalty between the two World Wars revealed significant vulnerabilities in the German-dominated trade. As German Milwaukeeans sought to redeem their old status while maintaining their Americanness, the city's national brewing giants pursued new ways to "return" to old prosperity in German-American drinking culture while also affirming their unthreatening and essential place in the maturing American metropolis. Recognizing the need for a "popular-priced" beer line to help boost its post-Prohibition sales, the Schlitz Brewing Company introduced its "Old Milwaukee" brand beer in 1934. The brand harkened back to the light "Milwaukee"-labeled lagers that the city's German brewers introduced to national markets in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. At the center of the Old Milwaukee label, however, was an image of a non-descript, Alpine-Germanic building, not in the likeness of any specific structure in Milwaukee. Schlitz thus advanced a vision of Old Milwaukee that was not rooted necessarily in the city as it actually existed as a historic place or German immigrants as a historic people, but rather in a nostalgia for the feelings of Germanness associated with its old German Athens reputation. Yet, the light, cheaply priced lager broadly appealed to working-class American beer drinkers, regardless of their affinity for its Germanic roots.[102] The Gettelman Brewing Company similarly engaged nostalgic, unthreatening forms of German culture when, in 1946, they introduced "Fritzie"—a new eight-ounce bottle of beer—inspired by *heinzelmännchen*, the house gnomes of German folklore.[103] The company created a cartoon version of Fritzie for its marketing campaigns—a beer bottle with a round, rosy face and Tyrolean hat—which they

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[102] Michael R. Reilly, "1933-1969," *Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company: A Chronological History*, March 24, 2013, http://www.slahs.org/schlitz/history5.htm; "Old Milwaukee, Beer Label" 1936, Wisconsin Division of Elections and Records: Trademark Record, 1902-1964, Image I.D. 90670, Wisconsin Historical Society, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=N:4294963828-4294955414&dsNavOnly=Ntk:All%7cbeer%7c3%7c-Subject%7cAdvertising%7c3%7c,N:1136&dsRecordDetails=R:IM90670.

[103] Nancy Moore Gettelman, *The A. Gettelman Brewing Company: One-Hundred and Seven Years of a Family Brewery in Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Procrustes Press, 1995), 90–91.

featured in different humorous scenes painted on the exterior walls of several Milwaukee taverns.[104]

Perhaps the most significant treatment of the city's brewing industry came with Thomas Cochran's 1948 history of the Pabst Brewing Company, the inaugural work of the New York University Graduate School of Business' Business History Series. Although it was published after the Second World War, Cochran's narrative was largely developed to mark the company's centennial anniversary in 1944, at the height of U.S. involvement in Europe. In this context, Cochran tells the story of a company with clear origins in Germanness—developed by German immigrants and having thrived in Milwaukee's beer-centric German culture—but that was ultimately, as the title suggests, "the history of an American business." As "one of the oldest of the great American brewing concerns," Cochran argues, "[Pabst] maintained a leading position in its industry," and served as a model for "successful entrepreneurship and the adjustment of a business firm to changing conditions in technology, markets, and competition."[105] In his forward to the volume, the Dean of NYU's Graduate School of Business, G. Rowland Collins, asserts, "Business is the work of the world. In peace or in war, it is humanity's chiefest task." Intentionally or unintentionally echoing Oscar Handlin's proclamation about immigration's importance to American history, Collins claims, "The history of American business, in a very real sense, is the basic history of these United States."[106] In depicting Pabst as a model American business, then, Cochran employed similar visions of the place of Germanness in American society as Bruce: Although German in origin, Pabst had become exceptionally American by

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[104] Ibid., 96–98.
[105] Thomas C. Cochran, *The Pabst Brewing Company: The History of an American Business* (New York: New York University Press, 1948), vii.
[106] Ibid., vi.

building a lasting and productive business enterprise. In celebrating such German immigrant entrepreneurism, Cochran conversely condemned forces that challenged prevailing pro-business regimes and visions of German-American passivity as un-American. In recounting the events of the Eight-Hour Movement of May 1886, for instance, Cochran claims Captain Frederick Pabst was initially sympathetic to worker demands for union recognition and Sundays off, but suggests that his benevolence soured when more unreasonable movement leaders closed the plant in the general strike.[107] Moreover, Cochran asserts that it was primarily the "conciliatory leadership" of company officials, not the work of organized labor, that granted workers lucrative contracts and secured "continuous [labor] harmony" in later decades.[108] Cochran also paints Pabst as a valuable asset to the American war effort, having "sent some 450,000 barrels to the armed forces overseas in 1945," and "employing almost 4,000 people" in its Milwaukee and Peoria plants."[109] Such notions helped re-secure brewing's central place in the city's economy, and delineated the boundaries of acceptability in the imaginary of Old Milwaukee.

While the city's brewers steeped their post-Prohibition return in emerging visions of Old Milwaukee, civic boosters and cultural agents similarly worked to restore and reimagine Milwaukee's historically beer-driven German festive culture in a more cosmopolitan city. In April 1933, the city staged a Volksfest at the downtown Auditorium to officially celebrate the end of Prohibition. Although the event was organized as a multi-cultural folk fair featuring cultural displays from many ethnic organizations, the event, as the name suggests, most prominently featured carefully selected, agreeable elements of German culture. In addition to copious amounts of the city's famous and newly exonerated beer, the Volksfest featured

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[107] Ibid., 274–89.
[108] Ibid., 301.
[109] Ibid., 394–96.

performances of German bands, like Joseph Clauder's Band, which were popular entertainers in the city's beer gardens prior to Prohibition, and a "German style meal" that included sauerkraut, ham, rye bread, frankfurters, and Limburger and Swiss cheeses.[110] Behind these displays of Germanness, however, was an underlying performance and advertisement of the city's *gemütlichkeit*. Beer was back, and Milwaukee was once again a fun place to visit. "*Ich habe sauerkraut gegessen* [I ate sauerkraut]," Mayor Hoan declared in German to the cheers of the capacity crowd, "and now I am happy that all of us thirsty are here for a sample of Milwaukee's hospitality."[111] Hosting visitors from throughout the country and gaining national press coverage, festival chairman Chauncey Yockey suggested that the celebration was "Milwaukee's way of showing the … country what beer really means. It means … that with beer comes a return of that good natured, comfortable cheerfulness and identity … that Milwaukee associated in times gone by with a mug of beer, a table, and beer gardens. … Good fellowship is what I mean.'"[112] Such sentiments translated well across Milwaukee's other white ethnic groups. "It is *Veselje* tonight," Julia Botic of the festival's Croatian delegation told the *Milwaukee Journal*. "The Germans say *Gemütlichkeit*. We say *Veselje*. … It means happiness. … It is like the old country."[113] *Gemütlichkeit*, therefore, offered Milwaukeeans not only a path to a more vibrant future, but also a vision of a future with a nostalgic eye to the past. *Gemütlichkeit* provided an alternative form of commercialized amusement that still embodied the values of both Old World and Old Milwaukee.

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[110] Robert F. Zeidel, "Beer Returns To Cream City," *Milwaukee History* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 28–30.
[111] "20,000 Surge Into Auditorium for Beer Festival," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 18, 1933, Local news, p. 1.
[112] Chauncey Yockey quoted in Greene, "Dealing with Diversity," 835.
[113] "Just Like Old Days in Milwaukee," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 18, 1933, Local news, p. 1.

Louise W. Mears's employed similar forms of cultural selectivity in her survey of the city's food culture, "Milwaukee: A City of Good Foods," which appeared in a 1941 edition of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*. Aside from some discussion of Italian bologna and pasta (to which she adds, "German cooks are particularly fond of noodles"), and Swiss cheese and ice cream, Mears devotes the bulk of her analysis to detailing the prevalence of German foods in the city.[114] In describing Milwaukee's lunch counters, for instance, Mears remarks, "A meat sandwich, for the hearty appetite, may be, in a traditional German atmosphere, a favorite '*Braunschweiger* liver sausage' between slices of whole-rye bread or *Pumpernickel*."[115] Mears also recounts the history of *Sauerkraut* in the city—an "art … as old as the coming of the first Germans." She explains that the traditional German dish was commonly made at home with cabbage grown in nearby fields, and often "cooked, boiled, or stewed with meat—spareribs, bacon, or salt meat." Like Cochran's Pabst narrative, Mears notes that several sauerkraut factories had emerged by the time of her writing, especially between Milwaukee and Racine, which served growing markets for the traditional German food that had "become genteel in the vegetable cocktails and salads of the menus of the city dwellers."[116] Mears likewise records the growth of Milwaukee's German-dominated sausage industry. She especially considered the Usinger sausage factory, whose showroom was adorned with colorful frescoes of German elves and German sayings. Mears offers little-to-no such detailed treatments of the Italian, Polish, or Russian delis or bakeries that had emerged in immigrant communities that had grown

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[114] Louise W. Mears, "Milwaukee: A City of Good Foods," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 24, no. 4 (June 1941): 434–36.
[115] Ibid., 430.
[116] Ibid., 431–32.

considerably through the twentieth century, much less the food cultures and institutions of the city's expanding African-American and Latinx communities.

Mears echoed the 1933 Volksfest's emphasis on the city's reputation for *gemütlichkeit*. Much like beer, ethnic food, she suggested—especially German food—played a special role in the city's hospitality and Old World charm that appealed to visitors. "Milwaukee, a city of character and individuality, reminds one of the smiling *Hausfrau*-hostess whose cordial greeting is invariably accompanied by the question: 'Have you had something to eat?,'" she claimed.[117] Mears also indicated that the city's ethnic foodways offered residents a medium for immigrant residents to hold on to Old World identities as they took on new American ones. "Good food is a kind of tradition in Milwaukee," Mears asserted, "perhaps the old world's contribution to the new, and without apology or camouflage."[118] Although the city had become quite diverse and modern as it neared mid-century, Mears proposed, residents shared common experiences as the basic channels of Old World family traditions remained largely intact in the city's food culture. "One may visit the various parks on fine summer Sundays and find opportunity to observe the foods of the different nationalities—German, Polish, Italian, and others, depending upon the section of the city visited," Mears notes. "The groups of old and young arrive, laden with ample baskets, and swiftly the table is set, or the cloth is spread upon the grass, and the family group finds *gemütlich* enjoyment in the abundance of good cooking and simple hospitality."[119] Intentionally or unintentionally, Mears's description of the common Milwaukee Sunday picnic provides a revealing metaphor for visions of German privilege in the city's prevailing ethnic hierarchy that were embedded in such Old Milwaukee narratives. In addition to having its own

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[117] Ibid., 430.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid., 436.

ethnic food traditions, Germanness also provided the blanket of *gemütlichkeit* on which other ethnic groups enjoyed their traditional family foods. While the city became more cosmopolitan as it matured into an American metropolis, Germanness and *gemütlichkeit* would continue to frame the city's cultural outward identity.

Perhaps the most powerful representation of Old Milwaukee was local journalist Ernest L. Meyer's 1947 book, *Bucket Boy*, a compilation of essays on his childhood memories in Milwaukee around the turn of the century. Central to Meyer's narrative, as the title suggests, was Heinrich Heinz, a retired brewery bookkeeper who was the *Kesseljunge*, or "bucket boy," at the *Germania*, the German-language newspaper where Meyer's father worked. While "not a boy at all," Meyer explains, Heinz's job was to transport beer from the local saloon up to thirsty reporters and editors in the *Germania* offices. "He himself constructed the tools of his trade; two poles, each about five feet long and each artfully and deeply notched," Meyer notes. "The notches were designed firmly to hold the handles of one-quart beer pails, and Heinz had mastered the art of carrying six full buckets on each pole without spilling a drop."[120] According to Meyer's memories, Heinz made as many as seventy trips to the corner saloon, bringing approximately 840 buckets of beer to the *Germania* offices in a day.[121] The traditional bucket boy trade had become extinct by the time of Meyer's writing, and endangered even in his recollections of the early twentieth century as the German cultural institution of drinking beer at work came up against American expectations of productivity. On one occasion, Heinz was let go because a managing editor accused the staff of becoming sloppy from drinking so much beer, which he replaced with tanks of ice water. However, Heinz was quickly brought back after the

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[120] Meyer, *Bucket Boy*, 1.
[121] Ibid., 8.

Germania's reporters and editors, angry about the change, ran a compromising story about a prominent local department store owner and major advertiser that Meyer suggests might have otherwise been ignored.[122]

Although not explicitly making the connection, Meyer presented Heinz as a kind of archetypal figure of Old Milwaukee. Echoing revamped visions of Milwaukee's Germanness, Meyer described Heinz as scholarly and proud, but ultimately old-fashioned, charming, and unthreatening. As Meyer explained, Heinz had a pleasant and devoted wife Hannah, a Dachshund named *Böhnchen* (little string bean), which he watered with beer "for health," and lived in a flat overlooking the Schlitz Park beer garden. Recounting his frequent visits, Meyer recalled, "The wind blew to us from Schlitz Park, freighted with the wheezy tunes of the carousel, the drinking songs of the *Gesangvereine*, and the smell of beer squiring from generous kegs."[123] While, like other German cultural institutions, the bucket boy trade faced obsolescence in the wake of Milwaukee's changing socio-economic order, Meyer implied that Heinz remained optimistic that such German cultural forms would ultimately endure. "He was proud of his post and he implied that if I applied myself assiduously and took his counsel to heart I might someday become a *Kesseljunge* and be held in high esteem [too]," Meyer claimed.[124] Unlike the cultural advancement proposed by purveyors of National Socialism, however, Heinz's cultural visions were quite passive. The bulk of his knowledge was devoted to the history of beer, which, according to Meyer's recollections, he spoke about to great length to anyone who would listen.[125] Although he was proud of his trade, Meyer recalled, Heinz loved beer more. When Meyer asked

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[122] Ibid., 6–18.
[123] Ibid., 21–22.
[124] Ibid., 2.
[125] Ibid., 23–26.

him if he ever dipped into the beer he carried, "Heinz looked at me astonished. 'But of course I do,' he cried."[126] Meyer suggests, however, that beer was the lifeblood of Old Milwaukee. "It was part of our environment," he notes. "There was the sky, the earth and all its waters, there were houses and trees, and there was beer. … We drank our beer neither with poetic flourishes, nor with undue gravity; we merely absorbed it automatically, yet with a full pleasure, just as we took delight in breathing the crisp air of autumn after a torrid summer."[127] Meyer's memories of Heinz, the antiquated carrier and historian of beer, thus serve as a powerful vehicle for Old Milwaukee visions of beer and *gemütlichkeit*.

Conversely, Meyer acknowledged, but downplayed lasting traditions of German radicalism in Old Milwaukee. For instance, he told the story of his father who had fled Germany as a university student and military recruit in 1880 after he had assaulted a Prussian lieutenant who had called him disparaging names "with the flat of the officer's own sword."[128] Meyer explained that, upon coming to Milwaukee, his father and mother joined a local group of German anarchists, and wrote for revolutionary newspaper. Yet, reflecting Bruce's assertions of German political radicalism in Old Milwaukee, Meyer suggested that his father's political aspirations were pipe dreams that he ultimately deferred for the practical needs of American life. "He never forsook it intellectually, but he had to yield his body to the philistines solely in the interest of family survival," Meyer explained. "Babies came—five of them altogether … —and father had to sacrifice his personal inclinations on the altar of his own fecundity."[129] Although comrades in the movement frequently visited—including Emma Goldman—Meyer recalled that his father

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[126] Ibid., 3.
[127] Ibid., 44.
[128] Ibid., 33.
[129] Ibid., 34–35.

took on a job as an editor at the decidedly non-radical *Germania* without complaint, having "mastered the rare art of surrender without loss of serenity."[130] Meyer proposed that the ideologies and experiences of nineteenth century German socialists in the United States, like his father, produced a German radicalism that was far less threatening or authoritarian than that of contemporary Nazis or Communists. "The Germans who lived [in Milwaukee] were to a very large extent descendants of revolutionaries of 1848, or were themselves fugitives from the blood and iron rule of Bismarck and the latter-day Kaisers," Meyer explained. "They were, most of them, libertarians having no intellectual or political kinship whatever with the scum (save for the refugees) washed up to our shores during the overlordship of Der Fuehrer."[131] Ignoring the socialist-led anti-war movement during the First World War, Meyer suggests that, while certainly energetic and devout, German radical political ideologies ultimately meshed well with American patriotism as Milwaukee's nineteenth century German immigrants accommodated to their new homes.

"One's memory can be a convenient instrument," Meyer astutely observed in his preface to *Bucket Boy*, "a kindly sieve separating out the dross and retaining the gold: fool's gold, perhaps, but of a warm and comforting glow." He surmised that the "knaves and fools and days of drabness" that undoubtedly comprised much of Milwaukee's history "have gone down the drain of forgetfulness, leaving a blessed remembrance of good times and gay."[132] Meyer's assessment keenly outlines the interwar project of Old Milwaukee. Facing growing crisis in war and social change, civic boosters, businesses, historians, and other cultural producers carefully

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[130] Ibid., 35–38.
[131] Ibid., x.
[132] Ibid., ix.

selected and broadcast elements of German heritage and culture that advanced a nostalgic vision of Germanness as a singular, unthreatening, and attractive cultural form that was essential to the character of the city. Although these visions largely built on previous understandings of Milwaukee as the "German Athens of America"—a colonial outpost in nineteenth century German mass migrations—visions of Old Milwaukee imagined German culture as dominant, but firmly grounded in the expectations of the American nation. In doing so, Old Milwaukee narratives delineated boundaries of acceptable Germanness that largely downplayed ongoing social conflict and political radicalism that could undermine German cultural hegemony in the city. Rather, such narratives emphasized more passive forms of Germanness—particularly beer and *gemütlichkeit*—which, as Meyer suggests, contributed to the "warm comfortable glow" of Old Milwaukee nostalgia. Old Milwaukee narratives thus articulated a framework for continued German hegemony as the city matured into a cosmopolitan American metropolis that would play an important role in the efforts of city officials and business leaders to reshape the city's economy and promote it as a destination in following decades. Although Milwaukee was not as obviously a German city as it was in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, nostalgic visions of Old Milwaukee allowed the city's brewers, restauranteurs, downtown business interests, and municipal leaders that had a stake in the draw of the city's Germanness and Old World charm to maintain it as a central part of Milwaukee's civic identity through the mid-to-late twentieth century.

CHAPTER TWO

Selling *Gemütlichkeit*

In November 1961, Mayor Henry Maier announced his proposal to develop a large, "world-class festival" in Milwaukee, which he hoped would draw tourists to the city and provide an engine for new economic development. "I envision the type of international festival which would attract not only our people here in Milwaukee, in Wisconsin and other parts of the United States, but also tourist trade, various ethnic and cultural groups from throughout the world," Maier told reporters.[1] Over the next several years, he and other city, business, and labor leaders collaborated to launch "Summerfest" in 1968 — a large civic festival held in Milwaukee every summer. Maier's plan proved ambitious as the event struggled to survive in its early years, but Summerfest successfully grew into one of the nation's largest music festivals over the next several decades. To this day, hundreds of thousands of people flock to Milwaukee's lakefront in late June and early July to see nationally and internationally acclaimed rock, R&B, jazz, blues, country, and hip-hop artists performing at various stages permanently installed in a park named after the mayor. By the 1990s, the festival regularly attracted 800,000 to 900,000 people to the park each year. In 2013, Milwaukee World Festival, Inc. (MWF), the non-profit corporation that organizes and manages the annual festival, exulted Summerfest's "power to attract attention around the nation and the world," as well as its contributions to the city's economy. "As an enterprise, Summerfest has a $180 million economic impact on this community, and employs 41 full-time and more than 2,000 seasonal workers, in addition to additional contract, vendor and construction jobs," MWF boasted. Moreover, MWF claimed Summerfest was not exclusively a

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[1] "Maier Studies International Festival Here," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 3, 1961, 1.

boon for the city's tourist industry, adding significantly to Milwaukee's overall quality of life and offering area residents "free or discounted admissions through various programs."[2]

In devising his Summerfest plan, Maier articulated a vision of a tourist event in which cultural displays of ethnicity played a central role. At one level, his proposal to develop an "international" festival that would appeal to different ethnic groups from Milwaukee and throughout the world promised to maintain and even advance a long-standing civic emphasis on celebrating Milwaukee's multi-ethnic diversity. Perhaps most prominently, Summerfest organizers' earliest plans included a multi-ethnic folk fair at the Milwaukee Auditorium similar to those the city's progressive reformers and socialist administrations developed at neighborhood social centers in the 1910s and 1920s. Various groups representing the city's different ethnicities exhibited the distinct foods, costumes, dances, and crafts of their cultures in a unified framework of a larger civic festival, depicting the values of a pluralistic American society. In addition to being a key part of his vision for Summerfest, Maier and the leaders of Milwaukee's ethnic organizations hoped the event would become the flagship of a national folk fair system that would bring a diverse array of ethnic cultural performers and visitors from throughout the world to Milwaukee every year. Furthermore, in programming events that emphasized cultural diversity, Maier and other festival planners expressed optimism that Summerfest might help ease racial tension in the city after recent civic disturbances and growing open housing and education integration movements through the 1960s. By the 1990s, Summerfest's multi-ethnic features evolved into a series of distinct festivals that currently comprise a summer-long festival season that includes Festa Italiana, Irish Fest, Mexican Fiesta, German Fest, Polish Fest, Indian Summer

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[2] "Milwaukee World Festival, Inc. Fact Sheet," *Urban Milwaukee*, May 10, 2013, http://urbanmilwaukee.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/5.10.13_MWF-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.pdf.

Fest, African World Festival, and the Asian Moon Festival—many of which are the largest such festivals in the nation or world — as well as Labor Fest on Labor Day and PrideFest.

On another level, Maier's vision adhered very closely to the city's prevailing ethnic hierarchy. Although Milwaukee's population became more diverse as different groups came to the city in search of industrial employment and economic mobility, Anglo-Americans (mostly from New York and New England) and especially Germans—among Milwaukee's oldest and largest groups—enjoyed a place of social privilege and dominated "virtually all spheres of city life." Newcomers were marginalized, relegated to the oldest parts of the city and the toughest, lowest paying jobs.[3] While often publicly presented as a celebration of the city's multicultural diversity, Summerfest effectively reproduced this stratification, granting German heritage, culture, and identity very important, explicit and implicit roles throughout the conception, programming, and organization of Summerfest in the 1960s through 1980s. Little of the festival can be recognized as culturally German today, aside from perhaps the copious amounts of beer and sausages consumed, and its "fest" suffix. Yet, Summerfest's earliest years very prominently featured German-themed attractions, like brass band concerts and polka dance parties. In designing the event, Maier turned to Munich's *Oktoberfest* for inspiration, travelling to Germany to observe the festival in operation, and consulting with its organizers on several occasions early in the development process. Moreover, Maier and other festival planners presented Summerfest as part of a historic and prevailing festive culture in Milwaukee, rooted in the city's German heritage and manifest in its dominant values. "We have something we call *gemütlichkeit*, which means good fellowship but something more than that in the Milwaukee context," the festival

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[3] August, *From Assimilation to Multiculturalism*, 1–26.

planning group explained in a 1964 report, going on to extoll the virtues of a city that's hardworking, pragmatic, and responsible, yet fun, relaxed, and hospitable.[4]

The development of Summerfest in Milwaukee in the 1960s echoed a new and growing reliance of large American cities on tourism and entertainment as important parts of their transforming economies in the mid-to-late twentieth century. As manufacturers increasingly left urban centers for the spacious quarters and pliable labor markets of suburbs and more distant locations, American cities engaged in competition with each other for the transient yet potentially promising prospects of tourist dollars. In this context, Summerfest was conceived as a distinctive and progressively spectacular attraction that might stake Milwaukee's place among rival national and international tourist destinations in a growing and competitive national tourist industry.

Such a large civic festival was not a new project to Milwaukee, but rather the culmination of a decades-long endeavor to develop an event that would boost the city's status and draw visitors. Nearly thirty years prior to Maier's festival announcement, the socialist administration of Mayor Daniel Hoan also worked with city officials, boosters, and business leaders to develop the "Midsummer Festival." Although large festivals and conventions had long been a significant part of the city's culture, they were often only one-time occasions, or, if held more regularly, limited to the community and organizational spheres that generated them. Hoan and company effectively harnessed the city's community-based festive culture into an annual, city-wide, city-organized and administered event. Every mid-to-late July between 1933 and 1941, hundreds-of-

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[4] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival" (Milwaukee: Prospectus Committee, World Festival Planning Group, April 4, 1964), 5–6.

thousands of Milwaukee residents and visitors flocked to the city's downtown lakefront for this week-long festival and its rides, games, pageants, concerts, dances, and parades.

Like Summerfest, Midsummer Festival was conceived as a kind of salve in a period of economic uncertainty—in this case, the Great Depression. The event's planners hoped that, on one hand, a spectacular festival would lure visitors and therefore business to the city's lagging manufacturing economy. On the other hand, they understood that a civic festival featuring cheap or free amusements would provide an affordable and much-needed distraction to working-class families struggling with declining wages and high unemployment. Also like Summerfest, ethnicity played a central role in Midsummer Festival. While not exactly sharing Maier's grand vision of an expressly "international" festival appealing to cultural performers from throughout the world, Midsummer Festival did effectively first adopt the multiethnic festivals of the city's social centers as a key part of the festival's program. By staging cultural performances in a multiethnic showcase for visiting audiences, Midsummer Festival provided an important foundation not only for Maier's folk fair plan, but also the use of ethnicity as an asset of the city's tourist industry. The festival's planners also referred to the city's "*gemütlichkeit*," describing the "spirit of hospitality" and festive civic culture that made such an event and the city itself unique and attractive to visitors.[5] "Milwaukee has much to offer its visitors," one festival booster crowed in 1936. "Here there are many possibilities for real enjoyment of a colorful and inspirational nature. … Being famous for its '*Gemütlichkeit*', there exists a friendliness that is

[5] Mayor Daniel W. Hoan to Walter Damm, WTMJ, July 10, 1933, box 18, folder 448, Daniel Webster Hoan Papers, Mss-0546, Milwaukee County Historical Society Archives.

not usually found in cities of a cosmopolitan type."[6] Indeed, *gemütlichkeit* and the Germanness it articulated had proven to many to be a worthwhile feature to draw visitors to the city.

Despite these significant similarities between Summerfest and Midsummer Festival only a generation before, Maier and other Summerfest organizers did not even mention the festival's predecessor in their plans, much less portray their version as any form of a Midsummer revival. This might be understood as a form of "institutional forgetting"—that the memory of Midsummer Festival was lost as new administrations took office and new boosters and business leaders entered the spheres of civic leadership. However, the continued prevalence of multiethnic programs and references to traditions of *gemütlichkeit* and German heritage instead suggest that it was more likely indicative of a certain level of "selective forgetting"—that there were aspects of Midsummer Festival and the city's festive culture that Summerfest planners wished to keep or reshape, and others they preferred to shed. A closer examination of this transition between Midsummer Festival and Summerfest reveals Milwaukee's civic festivals of the mid-twentieth century as contested space, targeted in the efforts of Milwaukee's power brokers to advance "growth politics" over "working-class politics" in the city's socio-economic landscape. Milwaukee's socialist administrations developed Midsummer Festival as a project ultimately for the public good, directly overseeing its administration as an entity of city government, and gearing it primarily to the city's large working class population. By contrast, Maier envisioned Summerfest first and foremost as an engine of economic development. It was still staged as a showcase of the city with ample opportunities for public participation, but organized within a

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[6] William L. Pieplow, "Our Metropolis and the Milwaukee Mid-Summer Festival, July 19-25, 1936" 1936, box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers.

model that favored private profit over public good, under the direction of a semi-private, non-profit corporation rather than municipal government.

Moreover, the transition between Midsummer Festival and Summerfest reveals changes in ethnic politics that accompanied these shifts in Milwaukee's mid-century socio-economic landscape, as well. As historian Victor Greene argues, city officials and progressive reformers employed multicultural festivity at social centers and later the Midsummer Festival as an important way to "deal with" the city's growing diversity in the 1910s through 1920s. By allowing all of the city's different ethnic groups to display their distinct costumes and crafts, serve their cultural foods and drinks, and perform their music and dances within a larger multi-ethnic festival, city officials and agents of reform offered a way for these groups to understand their cultural differences as connected within the framework of the American nation and Milwaukee civic culture.[7] The inclusion of similar multiethnic programing in Summerfest and the later development of distinct ethnic festivals signaled the continued commitment of the Maier administration and MWF to the use of such multicultural festivity as a means to both unite and manage an increasingly diverse city in the 1960s. Summerfest not only invited groups from the increasingly segregated city to find new, more progressive relationships in civic festivity, but also, envisioned as a "world festival," sought to foster global cultural connections within the framework of commercial festivity—offering a capitalist alternative to the specter of global communism during the Cold War.

Yet, the greater emphasis on the city's German heritage and festive culture in Summerfest indicates that this commitment to a more inclusive civic culture gradually became secondary to the desire of Milwaukee's power brokers to maintain the city's prevailing

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[7] Greene, "Dealing with Diversity."

racial/ethnic hierarchy and secure the powers and privilege of Germanness and white ethnicity by the 1960s. Particularly highlighting features portrayed as German in the festival's program, Summerfest organizers invoked traditions of festive culture deeply rooted in the city's German heritage to assert white ethnic privilege to the means and modes of civic festivity. In other words, regardless of how diverse or inclusive it became, Milwaukee remained German in the eyes of the city's elite who ensured that its celebrations were still to be staged in a German way. It did not matter how authentically German these features were, or even who participated, provided it engaged Germanness on some level. In the context of a commercial festival, such measures also effectively established Germanness as part of Milwaukee's "brand," with its traditions made into commodities packaged in Summerfest's program and sold to visitors and residents alike. The German word *gemütlichkeit* is often used to describe feelings of fun and goodwill that one may experience in large social settings (especially in the presence of beer and music), and organizers of Milwaukee's civic festivals regularly cited *gemütlichkeit* as a key part of the city's unique appeal. In between Midsummer Festival and Summerfest, Maier and other key players, however, worked to reify *gemütlichkeit* as a framework to accommodate, control, and ultimately profit from racial and ethnic diversity in Milwaukee's civic celebrations without challenging the city's prevailing Germanness and white ethnic hegemony.

Midsummer Festival

Milwaukee's civic festival tradition is nearly as old as the city itself, first generated through the celebrations of early German settlers and their voluntary organizations. Festivals became a key part of the city's mainstream civic life as various non-German religious, cultural, and neighborhood groups also organized festivals for their communities. Through the mid-to-late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, several Milwaukee city and business leaders, including its brewing giants, voiced their interest in harnessing and expanding these community-based festivals for the purposes of commercial tourism. The city had hosted many large national conventions, but had not yet developed these efforts into a more coherent and lasting civic initiative.

City officials and local boosters saw the national convention of the Elks Club scheduled for late July of 1933 in Milwaukee as an excellent opportunity to produce the event they had hoped for. Chauncey Yockey, local lawyer and Exalted Ruler of the city's Elks Lodge, lobbied for Milwaukee to host the 1933 meeting at the organization's 1932 national convention in Birmingham, Alabama. The consummate city booster, Yockey promised the national Elks that Milwaukee "will put on a show that will outdo the Mardi Gras in New Orleans."[8] To help accommodate such a spectacle, socialist Mayor Daniel Hoan, also a member of the Milwaukee Elks Lodge, proclaimed the week coinciding with the convention (July 16 to 22) as "Milwaukee Homecoming"—an official, weeklong, citywide celebration, featuring a wide array of attractions geared to both convention visitors and Milwaukee area residents at Juneau Park on the downtown lakefront. "In this way we hope to combine the efforts of your official hosts, the officers and members of our Milwaukee Elks' lodge, with the efforts of all of our citizens in making your convention an occasion for a city-wide celebration which we hope will be pleasurable, entertaining and at the same time instructive, and will be long remembered as an event typical of Milwaukee's proverbial hospitality and civic consciousness," Hoan explained in his official greetings to visiting Elks members.[9] Mayor Hoan and Yockey assembled and headed

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[8] "Great Convention Is Elks' Promise," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 17, 1932, sec. 1, p. 6.
[9] "Governor, Mayor Extend Welcome," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 17, 1933, Elks Reunion sec., p. 2.

a committee of forty-two prominent civic, business, labor, and cultural leaders to program and organize the event and its various attractions.[10] Moreover, Hoan proclaimed Wednesday and Thursday of that week "half holidays," and appealed the city's employers to excuse their workers on these days. "It is desirable that as many of our people as possible be given time off from their daily occupations to enable them to share in the festivities and entertain the visiting Elks and Homecomers," Hoan insisted.[11]

Some, like Betty Kehler, did not completely understand the motivation behind the shortened workdays. "I had a half holiday yesterday for Milwaukee's Homecoming or something. I was very much surprised," Kehler wrote to her fiancé Bob Wright (son of Frank Lloyd Wright), who lived and worked in Chicago.[12] Yet, Kehler and hundreds of thousands of other Milwaukeeans and visiting convention-goers obliged, converging on the lakefront, downtown, and other sites around the city for band concerts, dances, tours, parades, boat and airplane races, carnival rides, and elaborate fireworks displays planned as part of the celebration.[13] Hoping to build on this success, Hoan quickly suggested plans to make the festival an annual event, re-dubbed the "Midsummer Festival. The new, weeklong fete drew increasing numbers of residents and visitors to the downtown lakefront—on the current site of the Milwaukee Art Museum, War Memorial, and Pier Wisconsin buildings—every year (usually in late July) from 1934 to 1941. By 1940, the event had claimed an estimated attendance of as

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[10] "Milwaukee Homecoming Committee Roster," n.d., box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers.
[11] Daniel W. Hoan, "Proclamation for Milwaukee Homecoming Week" July 13, 1933, box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers.
[12] Betty Kehler to Bob Wright, in Elizabeth C. Wright, *Dear Bob, Dear Betty: Love and Marriage During the Great Depression* (Raleigh: Lulu, 2009), 166.
[13] "Hoan Elated, Suggests a Homecoming Every Year," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 19, 1933, Local news, p. 1; "300,000 See Parade of City Industry," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 20, 1933, Local news, p. 1; John Gurda, "Summerfest, 1930s-Style: Depression Spawned the First of Milwaukee's Lakefront Festivals," in *Cream City Chronicles: Stories of Milwaukee's Past* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2007), 255.

many as 1,245,000 people, a record that, as local historian John Gurda notes, Summerfest has yet to achieve.[14] The annual event remained extremely popular until civic attention turned to war production during the Second World War, and the festival commission cancelled its plans for 1942, ending its nearly decade-long run.

The Hoan administration first established the festival committee as a civic commission, headed by Yockey (later succeeded by Rudolf Hokanson, Vice President of Milwaukee's Nash Motors Sales Company), under the authority of the Mayor's office.[15] Midsummer was, therefore, envisioned as a "permanent annual municipal function of the City of Milwaukee," in line with the city's other public services. However, as the festival grew, organizers and festival boosters demanded that the commission have more autonomous, business-like management that could execute contracts and mobilize public resources for larger attractions without having to go exclusively through the Mayor's office. Among the most vocal proponents of such changes were the editorial staff of the *Milwaukee Journal* who repeatedly called for a more dedicated, full-time administration that could "put competent, businesslike and aggressive direction into the festival," and coordinate a larger program than the mayor's office could suffice.[16]

The Hoan administration took a big step in this direction in April 1937 by reorganizing the commission as a semi-private entity. The Common Council designated the commission as an independent municipal division that could access and mobilize public funding, utilities, infrastructural development programs, and other public resources. The mayor's office also

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[14] Gurda, "Summerfest, 1930s-Style," 255–58.
[15] "Commissioners" (List, n.d.), box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers; "Hokanson to Head Mid-Summer Fete," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 11, 1936, sec. M, p. 26.
[16] "Festival Future," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 9, 1941, sec. 1, p. 1; "Future Festivals," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 28, 1937, sec. 1, p. 1; "Festival Manager," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 16, 1941, sec. 1, p. 1; "Festival Management," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 18, 1941, sec. 1, p. 1.

registered the commission as a non-profit corporation, able to execute private contracts and establish business relationships "to foster and stimulate the civic welfare of the community by planning, promoting, engaging in and conducting festivals, reunions, pageants, home-comings, operas, concerts, athletic and aquatic contests, and all other civic enterprises of like nature and purport."[17] In order to maintain some level of public accountability, however, the mayor still appointed members of the commission to three-year terms, the city treasurer and comptroller oversaw the corporation's financial operations, and the city attorney's office vetted its contracts.[18] This set important precedents and effectively institutionalized public-private bonds for future civic events like Summerfest as the city, and particularly the city attorney's office, negotiated the standards of new business relationships with amusement vendors and sponsors, as well as dealing with insurance agencies on issues of liability for such a large civic event.[19] Yet, the commission's public end did not always function as it was supposed to, at times failing to receive prior city approval for vendor and hiring contracts.[20] In 1941 the *Milwaukee Sentinel* criticized the commission for operating as a "shadowy corporate body," frequently sidestepping municipal oversight whenever there were potential legal hurdles.[21] Serving as Assistant City Attorney and directly involved in these process prior to his election as Mayor, Carl Zeidler

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[17] Otto Robert Hauser, Milwaukee Mid-Summer Festival Secretary, to Walter J. Mattison, City Attorney, April 26, 1937, box 83, folder 08, City Attorney Records, series 01, City Archives, Milwaukee Public Library; "Articles of Incorporation, Milwaukee Mid-Summer Festival Corporation," March 26, 1937, box 83, folder 08, City Attorney Records.
[18] "City Festival Commission In Dual Role," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 2, 1941, sec. A, p. 9; Otto Robert Hauser to Walter J. Mattison, City Attorney, box 83, folder 08, City Attorney Records.
[19] Otto R. Hauser to Carl Zeidler, Assistant City Attorney, May 16, 1939; Hauser to John Dolan, Assistant City Attorney, June 21, 1939; and Hauser to Walter J. Mattison, March 8, 1940, box 83, folder 08, City Attorney Records.
[20] Otto R. Hauser to Carl Zeidler, June 6, 1939, box 83, folder 08, City Attorney Records.
[21] "City Festival Commission In Dual Role," 9.

presumably knew about these issues all too well, yet the 1942 event was cancelled before his administration could address (or ignore) them.

Midsummer Festival's public and private roles required a very delicate balance between the desire to provide programing that both educationally and culturally enriching for Milwaukee residents, and spectacular enough to gain a wider appeal and draw more tourists. As a result, the festival featured a wide assortment of attractions that, as John Gurda notes, "the Midsummer Festival offered something for everyone," including carnival rides, games, sideshow attractions, theatrical performances, band and orchestra concerts, fireworks displays, and air and boat shows. With a significant amount of help from Works Progress Administration (WPA) artists and theatrical producers, the commission developed "pageants" on a progressively larger scale as a centerpiece for the festival program. Such spectacles were, however, designed to be instructive as well as entertaining, often portraying key episodes in American, Wisconsin, and Milwaukee's history. Planned as part of a statewide celebration of the 300th anniversary of French explorer Jean Nicolet's landing in Green Bay, commonly regarded as the moment of Wisconsin's "discovery," the 1934 festival featured a pageant depicting this event and other key points in the historical development of Milwaukee.[22] The festival commission and WPA producers developed a "maritime pageant" for the 1941 event that, according to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, depicted "the discovery of the New World by the Norsemen under Ericson and the landing of Columbus," as well as the "vessels of De Soto, Hendrik Hudson, the Pilgrims and others in chronological order."[23] WPA artists constructed replicas of Viking long boats, the Nina, Pinta, and Santa

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[22] "Nicolet Fete To Be Staged In Milwaukee," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 6, 1934, sec. 1.
[23] "Ships That Made World History to Sail Again," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 16, 1941, sec. A, p. 7.

Maria, and other historic ships out of papier-mâché, which were floated on barges for the main program, and later placed on wheels for a parade through the city.[24]

Ethnicity played a central part in Midsummer's drive to provide attractions that were both locally enriching and widely appealing, prominently featuring a multiethnic pageant as part of its main program. This "Festival of Nations," as it was called (later renamed "Americans All"), directly reproduced the multiethnic folk festivals of the city's neighborhood social centers. As Victor Green argues, Milwaukee's early twentieth century progressive reformers saw festivals as a way to encourage residents with different ethnic backgrounds to interact with one another and openly perform and celebrate their differences, while simultaneously framing and instilling these differences as part of a larger, more pluralistic vision of American nationalism and citizenship. Moreover, concerned that new American commercial amusements corrupted the city's youth and created discord between generations of immigrant families, reformers believed that festivals organized to celebrate Old World traditions were a way to maintain family ties and provide more wholesome and safe places for young people to play.[25] Reformers therefore regularly hosted "folk fairs" as part of their regular educational programs at several of the new, publicly funded social centers they had established in neighborhoods throughout Milwaukee with the help of the city's socialist administrations. Folk fair participants performed traditional music and dance, wore customary costumes, exhibited crafts, and served food of their ethnic groups as part of a larger, multiethnic program. One of the largest of these events was the Harvest Festival held annually between 1927 and 1941 at the Siefert Social Center on the city's near north side at

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Greene, "Dealing with Diversity," 827–32.

summer's end. "The 1934 event was typical," Greene notes, "drawing crowds of 10,000 to 15,000 with around 500 costumed participants representing thirty nationalities."[26]

Dorothy Enderis, director of the city's social center program, and Will Kiel, the director of the Siefert Social Center and organizer of its annual Harvest Festival, were appointed chief organizers of the event's "Festival of Nations" program from the start.[27] As such, they basically reproduced the familiar social center folk fairs on a grander scale for Midsummer's visiting audience, using many groups from these centers. For instance, a "Procession of Nations" featured members of "more than 28 nationalities representing approximately 550 persons, all dressed in the beautiful and colorful costumes of the old world countries from which they or their parents came."[28] Groups like the Croatian Folk Dance Club from the Seifert Social Center, the Combined Polish Singing Societies from the Forest Home Social Center, and the Italian Folk Song and Dance Clubs from the Andrew Jackson Social Center performed traditional ethnic dances and songs.[29] Enderis and Kiel also maintained the social centers' unique mission of Americanization through emphasizing American pluralism. The program ended each evening, as an official 1933 description explained, "by a stirring and thrilling patriotic tableau of 'United All,' in which the different nationality groups together with several girls' clubs from the Siefert Social Center will take part," followed by a large fireworks display.[30] "In our social work we do not speak of 'Americanization,'" Dorothy Enderis explained of the Festival of Nations program

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[26] Ibid., 834–35.
[27] "Milwaukee Homecoming Committee Roster"; "Commissioners"; "Hoan Elated, Suggests a Homecoming Every Year," 1; "Festival of Nations a Home Coming Feature," [1933], box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers; Greene, "Dealing with Diversity," 830, 834.
[28] "Festival of Nations a Home Coming Feature"; "Milwaukee Homecoming's 'Festival of Nations'" (Program, 1933), box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers.
[29] "Festival of Nations a Home Coming Feature"; "Milwaukee Homecoming's 'Festival of Nations.'"
[30] "Festival of Nations a Home Coming Feature."

to the *Milwaukee Journal*. "We think of America, rather, as a mosaic of peoples, and we don't want them to forget their native customs and crafts."[31]

Festival organizers also began to accommodate, to a small degree, Milwaukee's growing racial diversity, and acknowledge its multi-racial history. Midsummer organizers, for instance, invited members of the city's Menomonee and Potawatomi communities to help develop an authentic and instructive Indian village on the main festival grounds, and local and state native groups actively participated. At the 1940 festival, the Potawatomi performed a ceremony dubbing Mayor Carl Zeidler chief "Man-Wah-Tuck," meaning, as the local press reported, "He with the golden voice"—referring to Zeidler's charming reputation for singing at public events. "The mayor and the Indians will sit on blankets and smoke a pipe of peace at the ceremony Friday," the *Journal* reported. "Zeidler will wear a roach (feathered Indian headdress), pass the cigars and pay for the lunch for Indians, which will be served in bowls."[32] The festival also became somewhat more accepting to the city's African American population, as a "negro chorus" joined the multiethnic pageant, singing "songs of the old South," in 1939.[33] Historically, the inclusion of Native and African Americans in American popular culture had most often been in the form of minstrelsy and midway sideshows, displaying their bodies as spectacles of entertainment and performing racial stereotypes. It remains unclear as to whether or not Midsummer's Native American village, the songs of the "negro chorus," or the ways festival-goers engaged these displays actually reproduced such patterns. However, the public administration and educational motivation to their inclusion in the festival offered important new

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[31] "Hoan Elated, Suggests a Homecoming Every Year," 1.
[32] "Potawatomis Have Word for Zeidler: 'Man-Wah-Tuck,'" *Milwaukee Journal*, July 18, 1940, Local news, p. 1.
[33] "All-American Show Planned," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 16, 1939, Local news, p. 1.

opportunities for Native and African Americans to shape their own cultural displays, and thereby claim a place in the vision of a more pluralistic Milwaukee and American society.

However, growth boosters increasingly called for more spectacular attractions that would garner national attention, suggesting that festival's existing program did not adequately compete with the tourist draws of other American cities. Among the most vocal of these advocates was the *Milwaukee Journal*, which ran numerous editorials criticizing the festival commission for not thinking big enough. "To attract visitors from distances a city must have something unique, unusual, worthy and sound, as well as something momentarily interesting," the *Journal* argued in 1936. "It must repeat approximately the same thing – with continued betterments and enlargements – year after year." Echoing the assertions of festival organizers and the Hoan administration that they hoped to produce an event that would rival New Orleans' Mardi Gras, the *Journal* continued, "That's how the word gets around. That's how people come to say: 'Oh, you really must go to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras,' or, 'When in the west you must go to Pasadena to see the Festival of Roses.'"[34] The *Journal* also explained to its readers that the development of a nationally recognized attraction with public financing would ultimately benefit the entire city's economy. "If by staging something really good we lured many visitors, money taken from the public coffers would flow back through private channels," the *Journal* maintained in a 1937 editorial. "If by devising a fine drama on our lake front we attracted national attention, then the advertising value, and the increased use of our hotels, stores, streetcars, restaurants and the rest would justify a considerable outlay."[35]

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[34] "What of Festival?," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 30, 1936, sec. 1, p. 1; "Great Convention Is Elks' Promise," 6; "Hauser To Ask City Fund For Big 'Volkfest,'" *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 3, 1934, sec. 1, p. 6.
[35] "Festival Costs," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 13, 1937, sec. 1, p. 1.

Yet, growth advocates found such endeavors difficult to produce "on the ground" as they contended with Depression era austerity, class, and neighborhood politics. As a result, the Midsummer Festival and the lakefront itself became highly contested space. Among the most frequently disputed aspects of the festival were matters of public financing as it related to the nature of the festival itself. The 1933 Homecoming festival's $20,000 budget was funded mostly through the sale of tickets for reserved seats at outdoor shows, parking, and admission to special events, as well as surplus proceeds from the Volksfest from April of that year. Public funds recouped the remainder of the outstanding balance after the festival.[36] Following the 1934 festival, however, the Hoan administration expressed concern that this self-funding model produced a reliance on commercial amusements, which they believed undermined the integrity of the festival and its main "folk" mission. "Gambling devices and 'peep' shows, found at the carnival, brought a police raid and censure from aldermen," the *Sentinel* reported. In order to rectify this, the mayor's office announced that they would seek "a $10,000 appropriation in the 1935 city budget" to decrease reliance revenue from commercial attractions.[37] Yet, carnival attractions remained a significant part of the Midsummer Festival despite ongoing complaints and repeated promises from the Hoan administration and festival officials that increased public expenditure would eliminate their need. This was in part due to the fact that the development of progressively larger and spectacular attractions, like pageants and fireworks displays, meant the festival operated at a loss every year, even with increased city and county aid.[38]

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[36] "$20,000 Fixed As Budget For Festival Week," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 24, 1933, sec. 1, p. 3; Otto R. Hauser, Secretary, Mayor's Office, to Joseph Nicholson, May 25, 1934, box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers.
[37] "Hauser To Ask City Fund For Big 'Volkfest,'" 6.
[38] Ibid.; "Festival Time at Hand Again, City Awaits Opening Saturday," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 12, 1940, Local news, p. 1; Homecoming Week and Mid-Summer Festival, 1933-1938, box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers.

Moreover, a few Milwaukee aldermen and local taxpayer advocacy groups increasingly voiced opposition to expanding public funding for the festival, suggesting it was an inappropriate use of taxpayer money.[39] The growth advocates at the *Journal* added their own spin to this, arguing that a grand spectacle might justify such a large public expenditure. "But whether an outlay of even $29,000 is justified just to treat ourselves to a sort of municipal picnic is another matter," they added. "Whether it is proper to use the taxpayers' money so that we, the home folks, may mill around on the lakeshore and enjoy some fireworks there, is at least open to argument."[40] In 1939, the festival commission worked with the city to transform the festival's emergency fund into a "Citizens' Permanent Sustaining Fund" funded through voluntary contributions and supplemented in part through the selling of tickets (or buttons) for a large prize raffle at the festival.[41]

Some of the backlash toward carnival attractions also indicates that their continued prevalence was due to some degree to their popularity with working class Milwaukeeans. Free admission to the main grounds and cheap rides and games provided inexpensive entertainment for workers and their families, which, as festival attendance grew steadily through the late 1930s, appears to have been a welcome diversion during the Great Depression. This did not sit well with growth advocates who viewed the festival and the lakefront as engines for elevating Milwaukee's status as a tourist destination. "So far as we can see, it is convinced that the real basis for a Milwaukee festival is a snappy carnival – a collection of Coney Island attractions,

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[39] Otto R. Hauser to Jerome C. Dretzka, Secretary, Milwaukee County Parks Commission, March 14, 1938, box 18, folder 448, Hoan Papers; "Hauser To Ask City Fund For Big 'Volkfest,'" 6.
[40] "Festival Costs," 1.
[41] Rudolf Hokanson, Midsummer Festival Commission President, to Carl Zeidler, Assistant City Attorney, February 6, 1939; Rudolf Hokanson to Walter Mattison, City Attorney, January 25, 1939; and Paul D. Bergen, Secretary to the Mayor, to Walter J. Mattison, City Attorney, September 6, 1940, box 83, folder 08, City Attorney Records.

with the good burghers enjoying roller coasters, Ferris wheels, hot dogs and ice cream," the *Journal* complained. "To us it seems that with Milwaukee bay as a stage, Milwaukee could do something 'stupendous' under the right masters of pageantry."[42] Even the socialist Hoan administration justified their push for increased public funding by promising a "real high class Volkfest" instead of "cheap carnivals."[43] Residents and businesses of the area around the festival grounds increasingly complained about growing levels of noise and the disruption of normal traffic in their neighborhoods. The County Parks Commission pressed the issue even further in 1937, threatening to ban the festival from Juneau Park if it did not drop carnival attractions from its program.[44]

After the 1941 festival, these complaints prompted city officials to consider making significant changes—once again taking aim at carnival attractions. Aldermen from the First (East Side) and Third Wards proposed either shortening the festival from a week or more to just four or five days, or moving its more disruptive features off the lakefront and into Washington Park.[45] *Journal* commentators added to these protests, arguing, "If Milwaukee wants carnivals in connection with the Midsummer Festival or any other event, it should locate them elsewhere than on the lakefront, on park land, or even harbor land." Clearly articulating a class-based neighborhood politics, they noted, "Carnivals can be operated on vacant lots, in neighborhoods which want them. … We see no reason for tying up Wisconsin Ave and Lincoln Memorial Dr. when many festival activities could be placed on Kilbourn Ave, Capitol Dr., such south side

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[42] "Future Festivals," 1.
[43] "Hauser To Ask City Fund For Big 'Volkfest,'" 6.
[44] Otto Robert Hauser to the Members of the Milwaukee Midsummer Festival Committee, January 26, 1937, series 01, box 83, folder 08, City Attorney Records; "Festival Ban?," *Milwaukee Journal*, November 15, 1941, sec. 1, p. 1.
[45] "Midsummer Festival To Run Only a Week," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 22, 1941, sec. B, p. 1.

streets as desired them, in the Auditorium, [or] elsewhere."[46] In other words, this was an issue of spatial "belonging:" carnival rides and games did not fit the aesthetic and growth rationality that middle and upper class boosters envisioned for the city's lakefront, and they and their working class patrons, therefore, belonged on their own side of town, so to speak. What did belong on Milwaukee's lakefront, the *Journal* maintained, were spectacles that were "educational, inspiring, patriotic and, in the end, nationally famous."[47]

In contrast to the scorned carnival amusements, organizers made it clear that Germanness deserved a place of privilege in the festival, viewed as a broadly desirable asset to the city's efforts to draw American tourists—despite the looming prospect of another with Germany. In addition to the German music, dance, and costumes that were featured alongside their ethnic counterparts in the folk exhibitions, organizers also established a large "Bavarian-style beer garden," prominently positioned at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial Bridge. Dubbed the "Gemütlichkeit Garden," the beer garden became a popular feature of the festival, and was expanded several times over the years. However, the beer garden's Germanness proved flexible to the commercial needs of the festival as it also took on aspects of American popular entertainment, like the "'night club aspect' of an aquatic show featuring high diving mermaids" it accommodated in 1939.[48] Midsummer's "Gemütlichkeit Garden," therefore, offered a vision of a "good" form of Germanness (alternative to the threat posed by the Nazis), made of good times, music, and beer—neatly packaged, non-threatening, and very accommodating to American visitors and their hearts' desires. By the festival's end in 1942, Midsummer Festival had not only established important public-private relationships for future civic events, but also had made

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[46] "Festival Ban?," 1.
[47] Ibid.
[48] "All-American Show Planned," 1.

significant advances toward the commodification of the city's Germanness and its *gemütlichkeit* as an asset of the tourist industry.

Contesting Postwar Festivity

As the war appeared to be coming to an end by late 1944, Mayor John Bohn began preparing Milwaukee for the post-war world—including a return of the city's civic festival tradition. Milwaukee was quickly approaching the centennial anniversary of its charter in 1946, followed closely by Wisconsin's centennial in 1948. Although the Midsummer Festival Commission was idle in the two years after the festival was cancelled, it still survived as a functioning municipal agency and non-profit corporation, and the Bohn administration called on its remaining members to plan and coordinate Milwaukee's official city and state centennial celebrations.[49] In its 1944 and 1945 meetings with the Bohn administration, the Midsummer Festival Commission proposed that the city hold a small, one-day celebration at the Milwaukee Auditorium on the day of the city's centennial, January 31, 1946, and plan for a larger, three-to-four-month (or possibly even a year-long) exposition at the city's lakefront as part of a state-wide centennial celebration in 1948. The committee explained that such a plan would make the city centennial a "curtain raiser" for a larger state event.[50] The committee also announced preliminary plans to explore the possibility of placing a bid to bring the 1948 Olympics to Milwaukee as part of the state's centennial observances. "It was agreed Thursday that the Olympic games, a spectacular event, would serve to focus attention of the world on the city and

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[49] "Fete Is Urged for Centennial," *Milwaukee Journal*, November 17, 1944, Local news, p. 1.
[50] "Centennial Board Urges 1 Day City Fete," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 17, 1944, sec. 1, p. 1; "Fete Is Urged for Centennial," 1; "$6,000,000 Centenial In 1948 Urged," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 4, 1945, sec. 1, p. 1; "1948 Pageant Favored by Highway Committee," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 23, 1945, sec. M, p. 27.

state," the *Journal* reported.[51] While it is not surprising that the Olympics did not ultimately come to Milwaukee in 1948, or that a bid did not even leave these preliminary conceptualization stages, such a notion exhibited the kind of "big thinking" that the *Journal* criticized the Midsummer Festival Commission of lacking prior to the war.

Despite these visions of a grand state centennial exposition, the commission reoriented its efforts instead toward expanding their plans for the city's centennial as the dates loomed closer. As a result, the commission produced "Centurama"—a large civic festival on Milwaukee's lakefront, running a full month from July 12 to August 11, 1946. The exposition featured many new attractions that indicated that much had changed since the last civic fete, including a massive military airshow (claimed to be the largest in U.S. history) with a demonstration of new jet airplane technology by Captain Chuck Jaeger, cutaway models of the atomic bomb and B-29 Superfortress that dropped it on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and appearances from Hollywood stars like Dennis Morgan and Jack Carson.[52] However, much of the event would have been familiar to those who recalled the Midsummer Festival, featuring many of the same or similar attractions, including midway rides and games, plays, concerts, and nightly historical pageants and fireworks displays. Moreover, the city's ethnic diversity was once again put on display as 2,000 people representing the city's different ethnic groups marched in a "panorama of nationalities" as part of the Centurama parade.

Yet, adopting the slogan "Saluting Yesterday, Challenging Tomorrow," organizers and civic boosters expressed hope that Centurama would symbolize more than a return to

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[51] "Fete Is Urged for Centennial," 1.
[52] "U.S. Largest Air Show Here With Centurama," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 6, 1946, sec. 2, p. 1; "Your Eyes Might Miss It, but Your Ears Won't," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 25, 1946, sec. 2, p. 1; Buck Herzog, "Home Town Cheers Those Two Guys," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 26, 1946, sec. 2, p. 1.

Milwaukee's pre-war "business as usual." In his 1946 postwar message to the Common Council, Mayor Bohn declared, "The Centennial celebration by Milwaukee this year should prove to be a veritable 'shot in the arm' for all Milwaukee. It should rejuvenate the spirit of civic pride and enthusiasm in the future building of our city. It should provide the zest and the zeal which will carry us into the new century of progress."[53] As Eric Fure-Slocum explains, Centurama organizers carefully crafted a "forward-looking image" of Milwaukee, shedding references to the success of the "pay-as-you-go" policy socialist administrations had established in prior decades, and other aspects of the city's prevailing working class politics. This image was strongly represented in Centurama's seal, which featured a large silhouetted male figure both saluting the past and pointing to the future, as the exhibition's slogan suggests, looming over a cleanly outlined, white, modern skyline. With city hall clearly represented in the foreground, Fure-Slocum notes, the seal "suggested a city capable of retaining the best of its past as it rebuilt an energetic, modern city."[54]

To help boost the status of the festival and usher Milwaukee into a more modern century, festival planners placed new emphasis on advertising. Even as it remained unclear whether the city or state centennial would become the main celebration, festival boosters began coordinating with agencies from the Milwaukee Advertising Club to develop a plan to "sell the plans and purposes [of the centennial] … internationally." They were especially interested in targeting "the peoples, companies, and businesses operating in Wisconsin, and the peoples, companies, and

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[53] Eric Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City: Working-Class and Growth Politics in 1940s Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 216–21.
[54] Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City*, 216–21.

businesses not in the state of Wisconsin who do business in Wisconsin."[55] The festival committee also appealed to major area businesses for sponsorships, and offered prints of the Centurama emblem for companies to "tie in" to their own regular promotional material. "Here, for the first time, is your opportunity to get solidly behind a civic promotion designed to build local pride, and tell the story of your city to millions of Americans," the committee claimed in its promotional message to local businesses. "Your own creative judgement will give you dozens of logical tie-ins that are commercially sound. Feel free to use any tie-in angles that do not imply product or firm endorsement by the Milwaukee Centurama or the Mid-Summer Festival Corporation."[56] As these endeavors indicate, Centurama presented an opportunity to carve out new spaces for entrepreneurialism in such civic festivals for Milwaukee's growth advocates who showed an increasing willingness to hand the reins of the community-based tradition over to private interests.

While, according to "generous police estimates," approximately 2,948,000 people visited the lakefront fete, attendance fell short of the 3 million that organizers had set as the month-long exhibition's minimum goal.[57] Optimism that the festival represented a positive step into a more modern future quickly faded as the city and county picked up the tab for a $348,700 deficit, and rumors about the event's mismanagement surfaced in the following months. Familiar criticisms about taxpayer responsibility for Midsummer Festival's annual debt were greatly intensified with Centurama's comparatively massive bill. In November 1946, Rudolf Hokanson resigned after serving thirteen years as president of both the Midsummer Festival Commission and

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[55] "Meeting Minutes, Second Meeting of the Board of Directors of the 1948 Corporation" December 17, 1945, box 5, folder 3, William George Bruce Papers, Milwaukee Mss CU, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.
[56] Milwaukee Centurama Committee, "Milwaukee Centurama Tie-In Material," 1946, box 5, folder 4, Bruce Papers.
[57] "Big Fete Ends, Lake Front Is Normal Again," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 12, 1946, Local news, p. 1.

Corporation, citing friction with Ira Bickhart, executive secretary to Mayor Bohn and chair of the organization's Centurama committee, and dissatisfaction with how the event's finances were handled.[58] One of the festival's committee members, former Republican state assemblyman Alfred Buntin, led repeated calls for a grand jury investigation of Centurama's expenditures—which was opened in 1950, but ultimately turned out fruitless.[59] Pointing once again to the committee's reliance on cheap carnival amusements as a source for low attendance and financial difficulty, one critic dramatically suggested that Centurama's backward and forward-looking emblem instead pointed to "a past recording the defeat of a well-conceived, high minded and dignified objective which, in proper hands could have augured well; and to a future unsullied by the sordid attempts at commercialization of the city's good repute."[60]

The Midsummer Festival Corporation and Commission survived the post-Centurama turmoil, but returned to dormancy for nearly two years until the newly elected Mayor Frank Zeidler expressed interest in reviving the annual Midsummer Festival tradition. In many ways, the election of the socialist Zeidler to the city's top office after two Democratic administrations (including Frank's brother Carl, whose term ended when he enlisted during the war and was lost at sea) represented a reaffirmation of Milwaukee's working class politics. This certainly applied to Zeidler's vision for Midsummer Festival as he attempted to restore the civic event as a public asset. In his inaugural address, Zeidler proposed that the festival be reimagined as a kind of local festival of the arts: "a full expression of the native and local talents of our people in art, music, literature and drama." Referring to the city's strong German cultural presence in the nineteenth

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[58] "Fete Friction Out in the Open," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 6, 1946, sec. 2, p. 13.
[59] "Buntin Called by Grand Jury," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 26, 1950, Local news, p. 1.
[60] Arthur J. Patek, Letter to the Editor, "Lessons of the Centurama," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 3, 1946, sec. 1, p. 18; also quoted in Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City*, footnote 21, p. 219.

century, Zeidler asserted, "Milwaukee was once known as the 'Athens of the West.' Today we need modern methods to again call attention to the talents and abilities of our people."[61] The festival's role promoting Milwaukee's businesses and industrial might, on the other hand, would be rolled into a new annual Midwinter Industrial Fair. "I shall give every aid and encouragement to private organizations which seek to promote the fame of Milwaukee through the sale of Milwaukee-made products," Zeidler affirmed, undoubtedly thinking of growth advocates who saw his election as a setback.[62]

Although the members of the Midsummer Festival Corporation and Commission were openly receptive to this proposal, Zeidler raised concerns that the interests of the organization's public and private bodies would likely conflict. Hinting that incongruities between the structures of the two organizations and the corporation's lack of adequate public oversight were to blame for Centurama's difficulties, Zeidler proposed that the group dissolve its corporate body and turn the organization entirely over to its role as a public commission. "It was felt that under the commission form the Mid-summer Festival group would be closer to the machinery of the city government and would find it easier to gain the support of the [common] council for its undertakings," secretary Wallace Maciejewski reported in the January 7, 1949 minutes, and the corporation's members voted in favor of dissolving.[63] The move ultimately proved fatal to Midsummer Festival as the newly rechristened Civic Progress Commission failed to get Zeidler's vision off the ground. The commission was, however, instrumental in organizing several large

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[61] Wallace E. Maciejewski, "Minutes, Midsummer Festival Corporation" April 22, 1948, box 89, folder 1, Carl F. and Frank P. Zeidler Papers, Mss 352, Local History Manuscript Collections, Milwaukee Public Library.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Wallace E. Maciejewski, "Minutes, Milwaukee Mid-Summer Festival Corporation" January 7, 1949, box 89, folder 1, Zeidler Papers.

public events and celebrations over the course of Zeidler's twelve-year term as mayor, including the opening of the Milwaukee Arena in 1950, and the 1957 and 1958 World Series.[64]

Summerfest

While Midsummer Festival ended as a Milwaukee institution, its past successes, failures, and potential boon for the city's economy certainly continued to loom large in the minds of growth advocates, businesses, and city officials who sought to establish similar kinds of civic events in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1958, the Greater Milwaukee Tourist Council, for instance, proposed a "beer, music, and sports festival" called Augustfest for the week of July 25 through August 2 of the next year, "intended to attract tourists to the Milwaukee area."[65] As preliminary plans were made with area brewers, vendors, and possible performances by the New York Philharmonic, the organizers assured Milwaukeeans that the tourist council would cover any deficit the festival might produce.[66] The council's plans for Augustfest, however, never came to fruition. In 1963, by contrast, the Schlitz Brewing Company, in collaboration with the Circus World Museum in Baraboo, launched its first "Old Milwaukee Days"— a program of concerts, fireworks displays, and other programs in parks throughout the city over the week spanning the Fourth of July. The festival culminated in the "Great Circus Parade" through downtown Milwaukee on the day of July Fourth. Between 1963 and 1973, thousands of Milwaukee residents and visitors flocked to these free programs, with as many as 800,000 people in

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[64] Folke R. Peterson, "Minutes, Milwaukee Festival Commission" June 29, 1949, box 89, folder 1, Zeidler Papers; "Seek Director of Arena Fete," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 1, 1949, Local, p. 9; "Seek a Fund to Fete Series," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 24, 1957, sec. 2, p. 1.
[65] "Barmen OK Augustfest Beer Tents," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, December 9, 1958, sec. 1, p. 2.
[66] Ibid.; "Top Symphony May Highlight Augustfest Here," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 27, 1958, sec. 2, p. 1.

attendance for the Circus Parade alone at its height.[67] With varying degrees of success, Augustfest and Old Milwaukee Days represented a return to visions of festivity as a form of growth in Milwaukee—that Centurama's shortcomings were not due to *too much* involvement of private interests, but rather *not nearly enough*. Moreover, as both events reveal, Milwaukee's brewing industry, which had become a global force in postwar decades, played a more powerful role in financing, administering, and supplying the city's civic events.

These efforts also reflected a new and growing emphasis on German heritage and nostalgia in Milwaukee's modern cultural landscape and its outwardly expressed civic identity, or "brand." Karl Ratzsch, Jr., chairman of the privately run tourist council and owner of the iconic downtown Karl Ratzsch's German Restaurant, sought to include a traditional *Sängerfest* as part of the Augustfest program, inviting German singing societies from throughout the United States and abroad.[68] Milwaukee frequently held Sängerfests in the mid-to-late nineteenth century that drew local, national, and international German singing groups. But, despite the work of social center folk fairs to promote the city's diversity in such festive cultural displays, Ratzsch's proposal specifically attempted to reintroduce this tradition and German music into the city's modern commercial festive culture. As its name suggests, Old Milwaukee Days cleverly combined Schlitz's "Old Milwaukee" brand beer with a nostalgic vision of the city's festive culture. Featuring restored historic circus wagons, the Great Circus Parade aimed to recreate the atmosphere of a circus coming into town at the turn-of-the-century—a nostalgic moment for those old enough to remember, and a large and exciting enough of an event in its own right to be entertaining for those who were not. The event's band concerts and large fireworks displays at

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[67] Charles Philip Fox, *America's Great Circus Parade: Its Roots, Its Revival, Its Revelry* (Greendale, WI: Reiman Publications, 1993), 7.
[68] "Top Symphony May Highlight Augustfest Here," 1.

public parks were also reminiscent of those featured in the city's turn-of-the-century July Fourth celebrations. Yet, as Schlitz president Robert Uihlein suggested at a meeting of company executives, using the allure of nostalgia as a tourist attraction required a delicate balancing act in practice. While employing their Old Milwaukee brand as a name and vision, Uihlein emphasized that Schlitz had to present the circus parade and surrounding events as a "historic presentation." "We are doing this as a corporate-level civic gesture for all of Milwaukee," Uihlein asserted. "This parade cannot be construed as an advertising stunt."[69]

It was in this context of postwar civic growth boosters' attempts to commodify Milwaukee's German heritage and nostalgic nineteenth century festive culture that Mayor Henry Maier developed his vision for what would become Summerfest. The Cold War also particularly helped Maier conceive this project as both a modern, global tourist initiative *and* a heritage project authentically rooted in the city's Old World ties. In early October 1961, Maier, still in his first term as Milwaukee mayor, was appointed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors to lead a delegation of sixty American civic, business, and labor leaders on an "inspection" tour of Radio Free Europe facilities in Munich, Lisbon, and other "critical Western outposts in the Cold War."[70] The delegates were expected to report back home on the conditions in these cities and raise funds for the anti-Communist radio network. In preparation for the trip, Maier also scheduled a side trip to Munich's annual *Oktoberfest* celebration, which coincided with the trip's timing, and arranged a special meeting with Hans-Jochen Vogel, the city's mayor. Maier hoped to lay the groundwork for a potential "sister-city" relationship between the two cities that might include the establishment of an Oktoberfest in Milwaukee, modeled in many ways on Munich's

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[69] Bob Uihlein quoted in Fox, *America's Great Circus Parade*, 17.
[70] "Berlin Contrasts Incredible: Maier," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 4, 1961, sec. 1, p. 3.

event.[71] After playfully debating the merits of Munich beer versus Milwaukee beer in their meeting, the two mayors agreed that pursuing such a relationship would be beneficial to both cities, and discussed the civic, business, and social structures and mechanics of Munich's world-famous annual festival. Maier invited Vogel and other festival officials, as he recounted to the Milwaukee Sentinel in a trans-Atlantic phone call, "to come to Milwaukee and tell us how to do it."[72]

Although he more than hinted at his intentions to the press in reports home during the trip, Maier formally announced his plans to establish an Oktoberfest-like "world class" festival in Milwaukee in November 1961, shortly after his return. "I don't believe there is any other city anywhere that has the natural assets Milwaukee has to make a success of a project of such broad scope and imagination," Maier claimed. "Milwaukee has everything to offer – both the old and the new."[73] Moreover, Maier asserted that such an event would be a major asset to the city. "The mayor made it clear that Milwaukee could use a boost in its economy and expressed his opinion that an international festival, 'done up right,' could be an answer," the *Sentinel* reported. "Maier said there was no doubt that with proper presentation to the public through all communications media, here and abroad, the festival would be 'a great tourist attraction.'"[74] The mayor's somewhat vague language describing a "world class" or "international" festival expressed a vision of a spectacular commercial event that would draw people from around the world, in line with Oktoberfest, Mardi Gras, or World's Fairs. Behind this rhetoric, however, was the

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[71] Henry W. Maier, "European Trip," 1961, box 78, folder 25, Records of Mayor Henry W. Maier Administration, Milwaukee Mss 44, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department; Henry W. Maier to Walter K. Scott, September 22, 1961, box 78, folder 25, Maier Records.
[72] William C. Carey, "Maier Defends Our Beer!," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 4, 1961, sec. 1, pp. 1–2.
[73] "Maier Studies International Festival Here," 13.
[74] Ibid.

implication that Milwaukee's European ethnic heritage, and German heritage in particular, uniquely positioned the city to take advantage of new connections between the United States and its European Cold War allies. As Maier and other festival advocates talked about opportunities to exchange tourists and cultural commodities between Munich and Milwaukee, they suggested that Milwaukee's Old World German heritage might be employed and strengthened as part of a larger Cold War internationalism aligned against the Soviet Eastern Bloc and the threat of global communism. For Summerfest planners and Milwaukee growth advocates, therefore, the Cold War not only provided both new markets for Milwaukee's tourist industry and conduits for restoring Old World authenticity to the city's festive culture.

Maier indicated that a public-private "consensus" would be necessary for his vision to become realized. "With the all-out cooperation of the local government, business and industry and the people of Milwaukee, I think we can do it," Maier claimed, ambitiously predicting that the festival could be arranged in two years.[75] In 1962, Maier assembled a "Blue Ribbon Committee" as part of Economic Development Commission to study the prospect of annually staging what he now described as an "international trade fair and summer festival" in the city, and, if possible, to make preliminary plans. This committee was comprised of several significant Milwaukee civic, business, and labor leaders, including the corporate presidents of brewing giants, Schlitz, Pabst, and Miller, the heads of Gimbels-Schusters and Boston Store department stores, leaders from the Milwaukee Association of Commerce and Downtown Association, German restaurant owner John Ernst, local entertainment mogul Ben Marcus, and Wisconsin State AFL-CIO vice-president John Schmitt.[76] While certainly echoing the array of public and

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[75] Ibid.
[76] "Festival Here to Be Studied," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 12, 1962, sec. 1, p. 1.

private interests represented in the Midsummer Festival Commission, the considerably larger Blue Ribbon Commission reflected Cold War liberalism—reinforcing coalitions between business and labor to advance the city's economic interests. Repeating the calls of Journal commentators nearly thirty years earlier, Maier demanded the group "think big" with their plans.[77] "I will not be satisfied with anything small scale," Maier asserted. "I am thinking of an all-out effort, which must not only be a one-shot success but must provide momentum for yearly repeats."[78] This group took these charges to heart, publishing its findings and proposed plan in "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival" in 1964. While they recommended that the trade fair portion be dropped, noting that it would be "difficult to promote and that the Milwaukee business community does not have sufficient basic interest in this type of exposition to warrant an attempt to produce it," the committee agreed with Maier's notions that such a major event would be a boon to Milwaukee's tourist industry and economy, and that Milwaukee has much to offer as world-class attractions. However, they also encouraged a more gradual approach, proposing a festival built in stages, reaching full force in 1967 or 1968. "The worst folly would be to bid for international attention before we are ready for it," they warned. "This community experienced one failure in the ill-fated Centurama of 1946. Another would jeopardize any large-scale community effort for years."[79]

The Blue-Ribbon Commission also agreed with Maier's proposition to establish a non-profit corporation to organize and manage the annual festival, which they did, forming Milwaukee World Festival, Inc. (MWF) in 1965. According to the organization's bylaws, MWF was responsible for "the promotion of social welfare and the promotion and production annually

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival," 13.

of a Milwaukee World Festival to prompt better communication and understanding between peoples of different ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds."[80] The corporation's board consisted of thirty-six members, fifteen of which were city, county, and state officials, including the mayor, county executive, and governor.[81] Most of the remaining twenty-one "citizen members" were the business and civic leaders that comprised the Blue Ribbon Commission, also adding executives from Marine Bank, West Side Bank, the S.C Johnson Corporation of Racine, WITI-TV, WRIT, leaders from the local steelworkers,' brewers,' and musicians' unions, and even legendary Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi.[82] By assembling such a board of "responsible, influential business and civic leaders," MWF argued, "[the festival] is operating under the aegis of a partnership between business and government. This dual sponsorship insures active participation by both segments of the community toward a mutually beneficial goal."[83] Yet, the move to an exclusively corporate framework was a key departure from the municipal model of Midsummer Festival. No longer would the city be involved in maintaining the public's interest in the civic festival, but would instead play merely a support role to a private entity aimed at generating profit for its contractors, vendors, and sponsors. "[Mayor Maier] thinks that the control of the festival should be clearly in the private sector of the economy," the Blue-Ribbon Commission explained. "The Mayor feels that the professionals and businessmen who would operate the festival would be the best judges of what would be feasible."[84] Likely with the past controversies of Midsummer Festival and Centurama in mind, Maier later maintained, "City

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[80] Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Milwaukee World Festival" October 25, 1966, box 23, folder 18, Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Records, M2003-148, Wisconsin Historical Society, Library-Archives Division.
[81] Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Proposed Bylaws of Milwaukee World Festival, Inc." n.d., box 23, folder 18, Wisconsin AFL-CIO Records.
[82] Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Milwaukee World Festival Inc. Board of Directors Roster" March 23, 1966, box 23, folder 18, Wisconsin AFL-CIO Records.
[83] "World Festival Brochure Draft" April 20, 1967, 2–3, box 180, folder 1, Maier Records.
[84] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival," 43.

government could not afford to sponsor the festival, but could offer municipal services and help solve problems."[85] As for public oversight of MWF operations, the Blue Ribbon Commission suggested, "Representation from the various governments should be limited and mainly for the purposes of coordination, even though the governments will be asked to provide some of the financial support."[86]

To organize the event, the commission and later MWF pursued a framework where major businesses, organizations, and institutions would be invited or bid to sponsor and promote the festival's events and features—what they called an "umbrella concept."[87] "The festival should be an umbrella under which many individual and varied events can be staged under separate sponsorship, with their own identification, but coordinated into a package that can be publicized nationally and internationally," the Blue Ribbon Commission explained in their 1964 proposal.[88] On one hand, this concept imagined the festival as a means of more effectively packaging Milwaukee's existing festivity into a tourist commodity. UW-Milwaukee's existing Summer Arts Festival, the commission suggested, might therefore be advertised nationally and internationally as a UWM-sponsored part of the Milwaukee World Festival.[89] On the other hand, it placed a greater amount of control of the festival and its offerings into the hands of the businesses and institutions with the financial and organizational means to become sponsors. While festival organizers would solicit sponsorships and contributions at smaller levels, they would melt into MWF's "overall coordination, liaison, publicity, and promotion."[90] Organizers

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[85] Henry W. Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous: An Autobiography* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1993), 23.
[86] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival," 43.
[87] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival"; Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Milwaukee World Festival Annula Report" December 31, 1966, box 23, folder 18, Wisconsin AFL-CIO Records.
[88] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival," 13–14.
[89] Ibid., 14.
[90] Ibid., 15.

also intended the model to provide flexibility to change the festival in any way necessary to make it financially viable and successful enough of a draw. "It is understood that the … festival will be a never finished, constant changing community effort," MWF declared. "The most popular events will be retained in future years with additions being made that appear suitable."[91]

It was with this model that MWF launched the first Summerfest in 1968. From July 20 to July 28, an estimated 1,250,000 Milwaukee residents and visitors converged on public parks, the Milwaukee Auditorium, Milwaukee Arena, and other sites scattered throughout the city for what the Journal called a "smorgasbord of events," including concerts, plays, film festival, air show, magic and puppet shows, water ski show, powerboat races, stock-car races, fireworks displays, and, of course, a midway.[92]

Multi-culturalism also maintained an important and expanded place in Summerfest as it featured a larger, national version of the multiethnic folk fairs that were familiar to the city's civic festivals. Rather than merely a showcase of the city's diversity, however, Summerfest's Folk Festival was designed to represent a national diversity, with participants "from many parts of the United States and every conceivable national background"—including "Onondaga Indian dancers, French folk dancers, British balladeers, Irish jig performers, Scottish highlanders, American square dancers, Greek and American folk singers."[93] From the earliest planning stages, Summerfest organizers imagined that such a Folk Festival and the overall event "could serve as a legitimate and inspiring form of cultural exchange between the people of the Midwest and other

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[91] Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Milwaukee World Festival."
[92] Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous*, 24; Richard S. Vonier, "Summerfest 68 Receives Bravos, Cries of Encore," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 29, 1968, sec. 1, pp. 1, 3.
[93] "Summerfest 68: Events to Be Sold, Events Confirmed" n.d., box 180, folder 2, Maier Records.

parts of the world." As the Blue-Ribbon Commission noted in its 1964 proposal, "Nothing breaks down barriers between people as personal knowledge of one another."[94]

Yet, organizers also perceived a growing local importance of celebrating diversity in Summerfest—not only in "preserving and strengthening Milwaukee's diverse ethnic culture," as the Blue Ribbon Commission suggested, but also in easing racial tensions, particularly in the wake of civic unrest in the summer of 1967 and an ongoing open housing movement.[95] As Joseph Rodriguez notes, national attention to racial violence and extreme segregation that earned Milwaukee's reputation as the "Selma of the North" "motivated white ethnics to participate in the creation of a new positive narrative that celebrated ethnic traditions," particularly emphasizing "the preservation of cultural traditions, the harmful impacts of urban renewal on urban neighborhoods, and the importance of community over individualism."[96] Summerfest provided Maier and civic boosters with a key opportunity to advance such an alternative image of a more inclusive Milwaukee. Summerfest 1968, for instance, featured a "Salute to the African American" at Lincoln and Washington parks, which included performances by the South African singer/dancer Miriam Makeba ("Mama Africa"), the South African Hugh Masekela brass sextet, the Haitian Jean Leon Destine Dancers, and comic Melvin "Slappy" White, as well as a special memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had been assassinated earlier that year.[97] The inclusion of Makeba, an active anti-apartheid activist who had married Stokely Carmichael that year, as well as other key African and Afro-Caribbean artists was a remarkably radical decision

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[94] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival," 12.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Joseph A. Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism: Design, Race, and Redevelopment in Milwaukee* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 72.
[97] Dave Tianen, *Summerfest - Cooler by the Lake: 40 Years of Music and Memories* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2007), 19; "'Stars' Features Set For Summerfest 68," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 22, 1968, sec. 1, p. 12.

on the part of festival planners to connect Summerfest to larger Black Power and Pan-African movements. It is unclear whether this program was the design of Summerfest planners who wished to seem more in tune with the needs and desires of Milwaukee's African American communities, or the result of pressure from Black Milwaukee activists and civic leaders—or, more likely, some combination of the two. Regardless of its origins, however, this "salute," as it was termed, was a late addition to the festival program, and remained marginal in relationship other cultural attractions located in or around downtown. Not surprisingly, the "Salute to the African American" did not satisfy local black leaders who increasingly criticized planners for failing to incorporate more popular African American artists into the festival's general program, as well as the conspicuous absence of people of color on the Summerfest board as they failed to improve such representations into the 1970s.

The first Summerfest also featured a special performance by "Up With People!"—a new nationally touring folk-choir attempting to counter racism and global conflict with messages of interpersonal love and understanding— at the Milwaukee County Stadium.[98] Although "Up With People!" received a more prominent place in the Summerfest lineup than the Salute to the African American, it, too, did not effectively challenge Summerfest's prevailing racial and ethnic hierarchy. While organizers asserted that there was a place for everyone under Summerfest's umbrella, these moves seemed less like sincere efforts to "heal the wounds" of racial conflict, as some proponents suggested, than attempts to allow for the celebration of diversity and represent people of color without distracting from the larger festival project.[99] "The Mayor … said that he thought that the Festival was needed now more than ever, in order to show the nation the positive

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[98] "Sun Starts Fest Swinging Again," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 25, 1968, sec. 1, pp. 1, 12.
[99] Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism*, 75–76; Tianen, *Summerfest*, 17–19; Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*.

side of Milwaukee," local radio station WEMP reported. "As he put it, 'We need to let the world get a broader, brighter view of Milwaukee.'"[100] In other words, Maier and other festival planners understood that any racial conflict in Milwaukee was certainly bad for festival business, but did not necessarily consider providing meaningful change to the city's racial landscape as any responsibility of the festival itself.

It was clear, however, that, from the beginning, Maier and other festival organizers imagined Summerfest's umbrella as inherently German at its core.

Like Milwaukee's other civic festivals, Summerfest offered familiar German music, food, and beer gardens. The Boston Store, for instance, sponsored a "kick-off party" at Pere Marquette Park, "featuring beer, brats and 'Oom-pah' music," as well as regular concerts by Gerhard Rudolph's German band as part of the festival's downtown program.[101] The Pabst Brewing Company also sponsored a popular event, adequately self-described as "The World's Biggest Polka Party," at the Milwaukee Auditorium.[102] Perhaps inspired by these fetes, Mayor Maier further connected Summerfest with cultural Germanness by writing the "Summerfest Polka" for the 1969 festival:

> Go to Milwaukee!
> How humming a city you'll see.
> Sing in Milwaukee!
> Trah, lah, lah, lah, lee.
> Prosit Milwaukee!
> Toast gaily and so free.
> Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Milwaukee!
> A happy place to be.[103]

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[100] "Mayor Maier Reports, WEMP" October 28, 1967, box 180, folder 1, Maier Records.
[101] "Suggested Ceremonial Appearances by Mayor Maier at Summerfest 68 Events" June 25, 1968, box 180, folder 2, Maier Records; Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Summerfest 68" (Brochure, 1968), box 180, folder 2, Maier Records.
[102] Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous*, 24; Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Summerfest 68."
[103] Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous*, 35.

The absurdity and gaudy boosterism of Maier's lyrics do not suggest an interest in advancing any kind of authentic Germanness in Summerfest, but rather a superficial and unthreatening form of Germanness that would be widely appealing to potential visitors. The point was not to actually produce a German festival, but to rather select aspects of German festivity—namely beer, brats, and polka music—recognizable and "fun" to both Milwaukeeans and tourists, to represent the city's German heritage and communicate its continued importance within an otherwise completely American commercial festival.

Maier's polka also suggests that he and other Summerfest planners saw Germanness as much more than a cultural commodity that might draw Milwaukeeans and tourists alike, but the core of the city's civic identity. To Maier and other festival boosters, Milwaukee was a German city at heart, and Germanness therefore needed to play a central role in Summerfest —even if only represented in beer, brats, and polka music. Maier's early decision to publicly frame the project in direct relationship to Munich's Oktoberfest, not Midsummer Festival or Centurama, revealed that Germanness played a key part in his Summerfest vision from the very beginning. By choosing Oktoberfest over Midsummer Festival, Maier disconnected Summerfest from the more modern traditions and controversies of the Midsummer and Centurama era, and instead connected his project more directly with Milwaukee's historic German festivity and the international popularity of Munich's Oktoberfest through notions of a shared German heritage. "The government and the citizens of Milwaukee have a long and continuing interest in the traditions and culture of Germany and its great cities," the Milwaukee Common Council officially declared in a message for Maier to deliver on his trip, effectively articulating this notion that the city's many descendants of nineteenth century German migrants shared a special relationship with contemporary Germans (particularly West Germans) that transcended the space

and time of twentieth century geopolitics.[104] As negotiations over a sister city relationship with Munich continued through the early 1960s, officials from both cities considered Oktoberfest the most obvious piece of cultural exchange that would benefit Milwaukee.[105] In an interview with the *Sentinel*, Munich City Director Andreas Kohl "suggested that a beginning, realistic encounter might be arranged … [for Munich to] share its enviable know-how on sponsoring a successful Oktoberfest."[106] However, proponents understood that this endeavor rested on more than the German cultural identity of Milwaukeeans, but also one of its key industries: brewing. Kohl told the *Sentinel*, "I know Milwaukee is famous for beer. … At this festival we manage, with the help of some two million visitors, to consume more than three million liters (about 790,000 gallons) of this brew."[107] Just as business and labor leaders imagined a shared interest in advancing Summerfest, Maier and other city officials and festival boosters imagined that they had a kind of "cultural consensus" that understood the pursuit of Oktoberfest as a model for Summerfest and Germanness as a cultural identity for the city overall as a positive endeavor for Milwaukee.

Notions of a German cultural consensus among Summerfest's planners were particularly evident when, in mid-January 1968, just over seven months away from its scheduled start, MWF announced they were changing the festival's name from the more generic "Milwaukee World Festival" to "*Juli Spass"*—German for "July Fun."[108] As MWF Executive Director Willard Masterson explained, "The name World Festival is being constantly confused with World Fair." At least initially, Milwaukee's festival would rely entirely on the city's existing infrastructure,

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[104] "Milwaukee Common Council Resolution Draft" October 3, 1961, box 78, folder 25, Maier Records.
[105] Laura Pilarski, "Munich Awaits Sister City Bid of Milwaukee," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 23, 1965, sec. 1, pp. 1, 7.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Andreas Kohl, quoted in Pilarski, "Munich Awaits Sister City Bid of Milwaukee."
[108] "Our World Festival Is Now 'Juli Spass,'" *Milwaukee Journal*, January 16, 1968, sec. 1, p. 1; "$120,000 Pledged For World Festival," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 17, 1968, sec. 1, p. 5.

and organizers felt that the name World Festival generated greater expectations of more immediate growth. "People are looking for a site and looking for buildings being built. It's not that type of thing at all," Masterson said.[109] The MWF board felt that the name Juli Spass, on the other hand, "fit more specifically the nature of the events planned." While the festival would feature an array of events ("some … not international in aspect," as the *Journal* reported), the MWF board deliberately selected a name that they felt "drew on Milwaukee's German heritage."[110] Perhaps attempting widen the festival's appeal or soften its overt Germanness, however, organizers accompanied the name change with a new logo "depicting the sun in the form of a girl's face" that would be used in all promotional material and souvenirs for the festival. MWF Assistant Director Dorothy Austin explained to the *Journal*, "The sun was symbolic of July, and…the girl's face originated from the idea that Juli Spass could be a girl's name."[111] The Journal later explained that this connection to a "girl's name" came as festival organizers adopted a more Americanized pronunciation that sounded more like the name "Julie" rather than the German pronunciation, "You-lee." It is unclear as to whether this was an oversight, or if they had done so intentionally to help detract from its Germanness.[112]

This decision received heavy criticism from Milwaukee residents and commentators dismayed that festival organizers had chosen Juli Spass as the name for an event they had claimed to be representative of the city as a whole. In the days following the announcement, angry residents flooded MWF's offices with phone calls lodging their complaints. "Some people who have called have been very hostile," MWF Assistant Director Dorothy Austin told the

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[109] "Our World Festival Is Now 'Juli Spass,'" 1.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] "Jolt for Juli," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 21, 1968, sec. 2, p. 2.

Journal. Others registered their opposition in letters to the editors of mainstream Milwaukee newspapers and phone calls to local radio and television shows that picked up the issue. Of the seventy-six listeners who called in to Bob Beasley's radio show the day following the announcement, for instance, only three backed Juli Spass.[113] The name fared little better with callers to the "Big Question" show on WTMJ television, only 12% of whom voiced their approval.[114] Following his show, Beasley noted that most opponents complained that Juli Spass was an "ethnic name, and [Milwaukee] is no longer just a German town," and that, with MWF's decision, "many non-German ethnic groups were being ignored."[115] MWF officials more specifically pointed to "the Polish segment of the community" as the most vocal opponents to the name. For instance, Dr. Alfred Sokolnicki, a Professor at Marquette University's College of Speech, leader of several Milwaukee Polish cultural organizations, and the chair of the planning committee working with MWF to bring a national folk fair to Milwaukee as part of the festival, expressed his concerns to both Masterson and the *Journal*. "If we are trying to connote to the world that we have an international festival, it means we've missed the boat," Sokolnicki argued. "Even if it had been Polish, I would have objected to it," he stressed, "It's got to be a universal appeal. The name should either be generalized, anglicized or forgotten." Recounting his conversations with other ethnic leaders, Sokolnicki claimed, "Some people have said to me: 'If this is going to be a German festival, good, let the Germans have it.'"[116]

Many of Milwaukee's Germans were not particularly thrilled with the name and its implications, either. Although Austin reported that MWF had received one call in support of the

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[113] "Show Business," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 18, 1968, sec. 2, p. 11; "Jolt for Juli," 2.
[114] "Jolt for Juli," 2.
[115] Ibid.; "Show Business," 11.
[116] "Jolt for Juli," 1.

name "from somebody who was German," most other callers who either self-identified as German or that MWF identified as having a German-sounding name joined the other voices of opposition. "A woman whose maiden name was German said she was concerned because none of her Irish friends liked it," Austin asserted.[117] *Sentinel* columnist Buck Herzog joked, "A German friend of this department commented, 'Raus mit der name. It vould zound lousy even in Achtober.'"[118] The *Journal* also organized a panel discussion on the topic with a group of local teenagers as part of their "Young Minds at Work" series. One participant who identified himself as being "of German descent" astutely argued that Juli Spass was not only too unfamiliar to be any kind of a draw to potential visitors, but also "discriminating against people who don't speak German, and in fact saying that it's going to be a German festival." He added, "If they were so worried about people thinking it was going to be a world fair, they could just call it July Festival."[119]

Some of those who wrote or called in to MWF and local media outlets also suggested possible alternatives to Juli Spass that they argued would be more neutral. According to Austin, one caller to the MWF offices suggested the name "Fantastic Harlequin Kaleidoscope," recounting that "it just seemed to her like a gay title."[120] Another proposed calling it the "All People's Global Festival," but Austin told the *Journal* that she thought it "sounded too much like a Communist celebration."[121] One of the other *Journal* youth panelists suggested "Happy Days in Old Milwaukee, or just Happy Days"— tapping into existing connections between the Schlitz "Old Milwaukee" beer brand and the company's nostalgic July Fourth programs, as well as

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[117] Ibid., 2.
[118] Buck Herzog, "Rousing Vote for 'Juli,'" *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 25, 1968, sec. 1, p. 15.
[119] "Juli Spass? Well, What Would You Name It?," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 30, 1968, Green Sheet, p. 1.
[120] "Jolt for Juli," 2.
[121] "'Juli Spass' Is Kaput as Festival Name," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 2, 1968, sec. 1, p. 1.

unintentionally providing a rather prescient nod to the nostalgic 1970s sitcom, "Happy Days," which was set in Milwaukee in the 1950s.[122] A more Middle-English solution was poetically posed in a letter to the editors of the Journal:

> For 'summertime,' the word is 'estival.'
> For 'loads of fun,' the word is 'festival.'
> I hope my choice, 'estival festival,'
> Turns out to be by far the best of all.
> Then every lad and every lass
> Can well forget 'bout Juli Spass.[123]

The vocal opposition of Polish residents and leaders prompted the Journal to wryly suggest that MWF adopt the Polish version of "July Fun:" *Lipcowa Zabawa*. Yet, others saw that the problem with Juli Spass was not in its Germanness, but rather its awkwardness and obscurity, and offered other German names they claimed would be less confusing. In a letter to the *Journal,* one resident recommended the name "Midsommer Festival:" a more Germanized version of the name of the city's former civic fete. According to Austin, another woman called the MWF offices to suggest they name the festival "*Tante Anna*," German for "Aunt Anna," suggesting that it would be a perfect name to draw people, "because everyone likes to go by their Tante Anna."[124] In a letter to the *Journal*, Milwaukee resident Lothar Hoppe more pointedly accused Sokolnicki of turning MWF's decision to "honor a certain ethnic group by naming the festival to identify such group" into a "political joke." Hoppe suggested that the name "Milwaukee Sommerfest" would be "more appealing to Milwaukeeans," explaining, "It does not sound strange and yet it identifies an ethnic group."[125]

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[122] "Juli Spass? Well, What Would You Name It?," 2.
[123] Nick Daniloff, "Letter to the Editor: New Festival Name," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 26, 1968, sec. 1, p. 18.
[124] "Jolt for Juli," 2.
[125] Lothar Hoppe, "Letter to the Editor: Milwaukee Sommerfest 1968," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 27, 1968, sec. 1, p. 12.

A mere three weeks after announcing Juli Spass, the MWF board officially decided to abandon it, and adopt the name "Summerfest" instead. Both the *Journal* and the *Sentinel* portrayed this as a victory for "ethnically oriented Milwaukeeans aggrieved by the German appellation." However, the new name still adhered to the prevailing emphasis on Germanness. Dropping their overt use German language in Juli Spass—now using "Summer" instead of "Sommer"—MWF still followed the form of Oktoberfest, applying a "fest" suffix to a season. This formula became a key piece in the development of Milwaukee's new festival industry in following years as MWF and community organizations attached "fest" to a wide array of events: ethnic festivals, like Polish Fest and Irish Fest, Laborfest, Pridefest, and others. The Summerfest name thus became representative of how Germanness became both a distinct ethnic identity alongside Polishness and Irishness, *and* also the framework through which these distinct ethnic identities were celebrated. Yes, Summerfest was designed to be diverse, featuring an array of events that highlighted different cultural identities. But it is also a "Fest," maintaining an established framework of German festive culture that emphasized beer, music, and gemütlichkeit. This was perhaps best articulated in the festival's short-lived slogan: "Old World Charm and New World Vigor."[126]

Planners also specifically took on German symbolism in significant festival features. MWF adopted the current iconic Summerfest smile logo in 1970. In the festival's early planning stages, however, organizers proposed that King Gambrinus, the historic German cultural icon of beer, brewing, and festivity, become one of the festival's central symbols.[127] While this did not ultimately come to pass, Gambrinus became an important name in the Summerfest's planning

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[126] "Cues and Blocking for McArthur Square Civic Center Plaza and Summerfest Openings" n.d., box 180, folder 2, Maier Records.
[127] "A General Proposal for a Milwaukee World Festival," 29.

and early program. In its 1964 proposal, for instance, the Blue Ribbon Commission suggested the creation of an exclusive "King Gambrinus Society" comprised of "the community's top leadership, including the festival board of directors" who would select a prominent local or national figure to rule over the year's festival as King Gambrinus. "Some may think it, but we are not borrowing from the idea of Rex of the New Orleans' Mardi Gras," the commission asserted. "Milwaukee's King Gambrinus will be representative of the Milwaukee spirit, not that of New Orleans."[128] Moreover, the official opening of Summerfest 1968 was marked by the "Gambrinus Ball," an invitation-only gala for Milwaukee's elite white civic, business, and labor leaders. "I think old King Gambrinus himself would have been pleased to see the festivity not only here but also throughout Milwaukee today," Mayor Maier told those gathered at the ball. "It's a time for good fellowship, a time for fun, a time for displaying the gemütlichkeit Milwaukee has made world famous. …The long-run promise of the Summerfest is that it can become Milwaukee's biggest tourist tradition."[129] For Maier and Milwaukee's elite gathered at Summerfest's opening party, gemütlichkeit, Germanness (as symbolized by King Gambrinus), and the interests of the city's tourist industry had become one in the same.

Securing a Future

Now approaching its fiftieth anniversary, Summerfest is widely regarded as a Milwaukee success story and one of the city's most prized cultural institutions. "Summerfest isn't just a place, it's a state of mind, and it has seeped into and shaped our very identity as a community," *Journal Sentinel* writer Dave Tianen proclaimed in his retrospective for the festival's fortieth

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[128] Ibid., 29–30.
[129] "Mayor Maier's Comments at Gambrinus Ball Honoring Summerfest '68" July 19, 1968, box 180, folder 2, Maier Records.

anniversary. "Families plan their vacations around the festival. Kids see their first concerts there. Teenagers find their first jobs sweeping the grounds or taking food orders. Friends organize annual reunions around their favorite bands. People meet their future spouses in beer lines or while staking out a space on a picnic table."[130] By the end of its 1969 run, however, Summerfest looked like it might suffer the same fate as its predecessor, the Midsummer Festival. Although it was reported that Summerfest 1968 drew an estimated one million people and netted a $9,400 profit, attendance had dropped considerably and the event had accumulated a $164,000 debt in 1969.[131] An MWF internal audit suggested that "Summerfest was unable to continue operations and still meet its obligations." Maier later argued, "Indebtedness is characteristic of most festival operations in their early years." He pointed to other instances that came to be regarded as successes, including "the New York World's Fair, which lost $40 million in two years; Hemisphere, which lost about $7 million in five years; and the Wisconsin State Fair, which had lost money for 85 years."[132] Maier claimed that Summerfest's early financial struggles stemmed from a lack of state support, poor promotion, and rainy weather that drove down attendance.[133] The *Journal*, on the other hand, suggested that the deficit was yet another example of city festival mismanagement—this time from the Maier administration. Yet, following the 1968 Summerfest, *Journal* commentators also indicated that part of the problem was that the festival was not German enough. "Summerfest could profit by including more events that are indigenous to Milwaukee – that genuinely 'belong' here," the Journal noted. "The particular success of two attractions, the polka party and the German band concerts in Pere Marquette Park, are samples of

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[130] Tianen, *Summerfest*, 6–7.
[131] Ibid., 21, 23.
[132] Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous*, 26.
[133] Ibid.

events that can help make Summerfest an attraction of genuine distinction for [the] city, region, and state."[134]

As these financial struggles threatened Summerfest's survival, MWF decided to reevaluate and tweak the event to make it a more profitable enterprise, and powerful players in Milwaukee's major industries stepped into the void. Charles Miller, president of the Miller Brewing Company, volunteered to serve as temporary director of Summerfest, and Ben Marcus, president of the Milwaukee-based entertainment giant Marcus Corporation, was appointed to chair the fundraising committee. MWF board member John Kelly, president of Midland National Bank, loaned MWF the money to pay down its debts without collateral, "to be repaid through future festival profits."[135] Miller brought the public relations director of the advertising agency that served his company on to help with Summerfest's promotional problems—paid for by the Miller Brewing Company.[136] MWF also hired outside consultants to evaluate the festival's program and layout. Contrary to the *Journal*'s critique, these specialists suggested that Summerfest was focused too much on community events, and too long and disorganized, while not providing enough spectacular features that would draw tourists.[137] "There are too many events happening simultaneously in too many different parts of the city," one consultant, a theatrical production and promotion specialist from New York, noted. "At very close scrutiny, many of these events are just padding. They are not special events at all. They are part and parcel of Milwaukee and have been added to this brochure to make it look bigger." He suggested, "Charge a small admission and get better talent."[138]

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[134] "Summerfest Success Calls for Many Gay Returns," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 29, 1968, sec. 1, p. 1.
[135] Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous*, 28.
[136] Ibid.
[137] "Stewart Hertz to Ted Levine," October 29, 1969, box 23, folder 20, Wisconsin AFL-CIO Records.
[138] Ibid.

The direct involvement of Miller, Marcus, Kelley, and other key power brokers was less corporate philanthropy and civic boosterism than an investment on the promise of securing and shaping Summerfest as a new, profitable marketplace in Milwaukee. Heeding the advice of consultants, MWF moved Summerfest to its current location, a former Army Nike missile base on Milwaukee's lakefront, and concentrated its program. Although the property now known as Henry Maier Festival Park was acquired and owned by the city Harbor Commission, MWF obtained control of the grounds through the negotiation of long-term lease agreements—initially for as low as one dollar a year.[139] The new site also produced an area that could be easily enclosed with gated admission entrances, thus providing a new revenue stream from admission for enhancing the festival's lineup, as the consultant suggested, and, with the installation of turnstiles in 1983, more accurate attendance data for festival planners and sponsors. As key Summerfest sponsors, Milwaukee's brewing giants built and continuously upgraded permanent stage areas on the grounds, like the Miller Jazz Oasis, Schlitz Country, and Pabst Showcase stages, in the 1970s. As Schlitz and Pabst sold and closed their Milwaukee operations, other major Milwaukee corporations picked up the torch and greatly expand the park's facilities through the 1990s, including the Briggs and Stratton Heartland (the former Schlitz Country), Harley Davidson Roadhouse (the former Pabst Showcase), and the Marcus Amphitheater. By 1994, the Potawatomi had also established a key stage on the grounds through their Casino enterprise, marking a significant transition from being marginal participants of Midsummer Festival in the late 1930s to a major sponsor of Summerfest nearly sixty years later.

Along with the move to the lakefront, MWF also changed the scope of Summerfest's entertainment from the "smorgasbord of events" it was originally imagined as to more of a

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[139] Tianen, *Summerfest*, 23.

popular music format they believed would draw more visitors and ultimately prove more profitable. In 1970, the first year of this new format, Summerfest arranged an array of top musical acts, including jazz greats Cannonball Adderley, Ramsey Lewis, and Sarah Vaughan; rock bands The Cowsills, Chicago, and Procol Harum; and soul artists James Brown and Sly and the Family Stone.[140] The strategy seemed to work immediately as attendance for 1970 rose to an estimated half million people, bringing in a $166,000 profit.[141] As one television commentator claimed upon seeing the warm reception he received on stage from an audience of rock fans, Maier, the symbolic figurehead for Summerfest's development and promotion, "successfully crossed the generation gap."[142] By accepting a transition to contemporary popular music, in other words, Summerfest organizers and sponsors secured the festival's future as a cultural institution and viable commercial enterprise in Milwaukee for at least the next generation.

In many ways, Summerfest of the mid-2010s would look very different to someone who had attended Summerfest 1968, and certainly even more so to anyone who remembered Midsummer Festival in the 1930s. Yet, it might also seem quite familiar. Festival-goers still drink whatever local beer happens to be on tap and eat sausages while spending a sunny summer afternoon with friends and family, listening to music and playing games. And, although most of Summerfest's ethnic programming has since been spun off into separate ethnic festivals, Milwaukee's ethnic communities still showcase their cultural costumes, dances, music, and food. This was the project: to harness, commodify, and ultimately profit from the city's existing community festivity. While Midsummer was designed as a free public event, Summerfest-goers now pay for attendance in addition to spending increasingly more on food, beverages, and

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[140] Ibid., 97.
[141] Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous*, 29.
[142] Ibid.

merchandise throughout their stay. Vendors similarly pay rent for space and facilities based on how much traffic their location gets. Once staged as public programming at neighborhood community centers, ethnic groups now rent the park out for their "fests," leaving less affluent ethnic groups underrepresented. As MWF's 1966 preliminary festival plan explained, "It is understood that the 1968 festival will not be the completed finished version, but that the festival will be a never finished, constant changing community effort." Profitability was now the key factor in determining how the festival looked or operated over previous attention to community desires or concerns for the "public good." The MWF plan asserted, "The most popular events will be retained in future years with additions being made that appear suitable." [143]

Yet, Germanness, and *gemütlichkeit* in particular, continued to shape Summerfest, not only in the ongoing consumption of beer and bratwurst, but also in how festival organizers governed the lines of acceptability in the festival's program. In addition to revelry and hospitality, *gemütlichkeit* also connotes entertainment that is family friendly. Milwaukee's nineteenth century German beer gardens and beer halls, common festive cultural sites, were often family spaces, providing an array of entertainment suitable for both adults and children. Summerfest organizers tried to adhere to this German tradition, planning "events aimed at the family unit." In its preliminary festival plan, MWF vowed, "Every age group will be considered when events and attractions are booked."[144] Organizers maintained this commitment in Summerfest's first few years, offering events like puppet shows, children's picnics and concerts, and even a "Grandparents Day."[145]

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[143] Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Milwaukee World Festival."
[144] Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "Milwaukee World Festival," October 25, 1966, box 23, folder 18, Wisconsin AFL-CIO Records.
[145] "World Festival Brochure Draft"; Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., "1969 Summerfest Event Sponsorships List," 1969, box 180, folder 3, Maier Records; Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism*, 76.

However, as Summerfest moved towards programing more pop-cultural acts, notions of *gemütlichkeit* as family friendly also shaped how the annual event was policed. During Summerfest 1969, for instance, the Milwaukee police vice squad arrested one of the woman members of the Flying Indians of Acapulco for performing topless during a religious rite that was part of their show. The police kept citing her as she continued to perform the rite topless for every Flying Indians appearance, until a court order blocked the police from making any additional arrests.[146] George Carlin was famously arrested by Milwaukee police for disorderly conduct after performing his "Seven Words You Can't Say on Television" bit as he opened for Arlo Guthrie on the festival's Main Stage in 1972. "I have seen [Carlin] many times on the Johnny Carson show, and I had no idea he would use that kind of vulgarity," Summerfest executive director and former Green Bay Packer Henry Jordan claimed, asserting that "Summerfest is supposed to be a family show."[147] After several festival-goers tore apart beer stands and pieces of the main stage, started bon fires, and threw bricks at police and festival officials after police ended a Humble Pie concert early because of a storm during Summerfest 1973, Maier dismissed these incidents as the work of a "lunatic fringe," and MWF further committed to programing "less volatile" acts.[148]

While overt expressions of Germanness had faded from Summerfest's purview over the years, Milwaukee's power brokers had effectively honed *gemütlichkeit* into a powerful tool to advance their visions for the city. By working to transform civic festivals from institutions of public good to vehicles for private interests through Midsummer Festival to Summerfest, growth advocates claimed community festivity and hospitality as commodities of Milwaukee's tourist and

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[146] Tianen, *Summerfest*, 23.
[147] Ibid., 27–29.
[148] Maier, *The Mayor Who Made Milwaukee Famous*, 30.

entertainment economy. Moreover, such endeavors helped secure a privileged place for white ethnicity in the city's cultural landscape. The city's prevailing racial and ethnic hierarchies were preserved in Summerfest and subsequent ethnic festivals as gemütlichkeit provided both the umbrella under which celebrations of Milwaukee's the diverse cultures fit and the standard by which they were governed.

CHAPTER THREE

Heritage Renewal

"At first glance, it might seem strange that so many of us here tonight to see the Streets of *Old* Milwaukee are involved in one way or another with the building of the *new* Milwaukee," Mayor Henry Maier noted in his brief words to local civic and business leaders assembled for the grand opening of the new Milwaukee Public Museum building in January 1965.[1] The "Streets of Old Milwaukee" was the new museum's first permanent exhibit, created to recall Milwaukee's material and social past that was disappearing in the wake of the city's postwar restructuring and modernization projects. For nearly two decades, downtown business leaders and city officials, fearing that the city would become obsolete in a rapidly changing national postwar economy, organized a concerted effort to clear "outmoded" elements of the city's infrastructure and usher in a more modern, efficient, orderly, clean, and attractive city through a wide variety of urban renewal projects. The Museum's Streets of Old Milwaukee exhibit sentimentally represented gas-lit, tree-lined, cobblestone streets, wooden storefronts of familiar community businesses, and other remnants of the nineteenth century city that postwar growth advocates ripped up or razed in the name of progress.[2] As Maier suggests, it might have seemed paradoxical to casual observers that such agents and proponents of restructuring were gathered at the museum to celebrate the opening of an exhibit honoring the very things they had worked so hard to bury. "But it really isn't strange at all," Maier insisted. "It has often seemed to me that those cities with the greatest

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[1] Henry W. Maier, "Ribbon Cutting, Opening First Floor West Wing of Exhibits in New Milwaukee Museum Building" (Speech, January 15, 1965), Microfilm Reel 2, Speeches, Records of Mayor Henry W. Maier Administration, Milwaukee Mss 44, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department; "New Museum Wing Revives Memories," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 16, 1965, sec. 1, pp. 1, 7.
[2] Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City*.

futures are many times those which are proudest of their past. They are cities that try to preserve mementos of that past even as they continue to build anew'"[3]

Meier's remarks at the museum's grand opening—a key piece of an ongoing and controversial downtown Civic Center renewal project—reveals that a sense of history and heritage remained an important part of Milwaukee's midcentury growth politics, particularly in the form of nostalgic representations of the past. As commerce and tourism became increasingly dominant facets of the American postwar economy over more traditional forms of manufacturing, Milwaukee accompanied many other American cities in reorienting public resources towards restructuring its landscapes and updating its infrastructure to remain relevant and competitive—largely in partnership with major business interests. However, as Maier explicitly suggests, these renewal pursuits did not represent a wholesale rejection of the city's past. Rather, growth agents carefully selected and (re)interpreted certain physical and social remnants from Milwaukee's history to help advance their redevelopment efforts and secure the city's white ethnic hegemony as renewal projects disrupted or destroyed traditional community relationships. As with Summerfest, this was in part a commodification project: Milwaukee's growth agents (re)collected, reimagined, and recycled derelict artifacts of the city's past infrastructure and cultural heritage as features of a new downtown entertainment economy that appealed to tourists and white middle class suburban consumers. While occasionally deploying the language and tools of historic preservation in their endeavors, growth agents understood preservation as just one of many tools that served their larger mission to renew and repackage Milwaukee as a destination city. Historical artifacts and sites were thus detached from any

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[3] Maier, "Ribbon Cutting, Opening First Floor West Wing of Exhibits in New Milwaukee Museum Building"; "New Museum Wing Revives Memories," 7.

existing social functions and meanings they might have had in urban communities, and ascribed a more quantifiable value in accordance with their ability to be refashioned and sold as pieces of Milwaukee's new entertainment economy.

Through the selection and (re)interpretation of some historical pieces and elements over others, displays like the Streets of Old Milwaukee also helped growth agents to craft a nostalgic narrative of the city's history—collaborating in the construction of a "pride in the [city's] past" that supported their visions, and eliding or marginalizing elements that they felt challenged them. While curated and designed by trained museum professionals, the new Milwaukee Public Museum and its Streets of Old Milwaukee exhibit were developed as pieces of what Maier termed the "New Milwaukee" in the Civic Center development project, and museum officials aligned their interests with the key growth agents on which they relied for financial and political support. In turn, many of Milwaukee's business and civic leaders recognized the powerful potential of the Streets of Old Milwaukee as a framework for interpreting Milwaukee's past (given legitimacy in the setting of the museum), revealed in their eagerness to have a say in what the exhibit looked like through their funding and material contributions. Favoring the origins and successes of major local businesses over the important roles of labor organizations, or the contributions of Germans over a diverse array of groups in the city's historic development, for instance, exhibit developers and boosters effectively reoriented interpretations of the city's past away from key social and political conflicts and towards understandings more in tune with contemporary growth politics: safety, entrepreneurial vibrancy, and *gemütlichkeit*. Moreover, as Maier suggests, by embedding artifacts of the city's history into the city's redevelopment efforts, these materials and their social meanings were transformed into "mementos" of "Old

Milwaukee"— pieces of nostalgia and heritage securely imagined as part of the past, with little relevance to the present.

Nostalgic displays like the Streets of Old Milwaukee also produced an ideal aesthetic that Milwaukee's civic and business leaders worked to emulate on the ground—wielding heritage and nostalgia as unorthodox, but effective gadgets in their renewal toolbox. As with the exhibit's *artificial* streets, growth agents carefully selected, reimagined, recycled and reproduced certain artifacts and sites from a nostalgic past to help create the *actual* streets of the city's new downtown entertainment economy. Several pieces of the city's nineteenth century infrastructure that downtown growth interests had removed to make way for modernization in the 1940s through 1960s found new life in the creation of destinations like Old World Third Street in the 1970s and 1980s: cobblestoned intersections, electric replicas of gas streetlamps, and restored and repurposed building facades. Such endeavors in what I call "heritage renewal" thus represented a particularly potent form of "creative destruction" in urban renewal, seeking to reinterpret the past in the process of restructuring city's landscape. The nostalgic ideal produced in Milwaukee's new entertainment streetscapes stood in as an authentic past in people's real experiences on downtown's streets, shopping, dining, drinking, playing, and working.

However, such nostalgic visions were not limited to the scope of Milwaukee's past. As the name, "Old World Third Street," suggests, European ethnic heritage—especially Germanness—occupied a special place in the historical imagination of the city's growth boosters who readily incorporated "Old World" aesthetics into their restructuring work alongside those of "Old Milwaukee." These efforts coincided with attempts to make new connections between Milwaukee and Western European economic centers during the Cold War. In fact, the morning following the museum's grand opening celebration, Bert Mulroy, a staff assistant to the mayor,

announced on WEMP radio's "Report to the People" program that Milwaukee would pursue a "sister city" relationship with "one of the larger cities of Germany." Through this program, Mulroy explained, Milwaukee would select "a foreign city—usually on the basis of mutual interests—for close international relationship," thereby "[enabling] citizens of the world to know and understand each other better." The mayor had appointed a special committee of twenty-seven representatives of "the main ethnic groups in our community" who narrowed the choice of Milwaukee's potential "sisters" down to major German cities. Mulroy noted that this decision was in part a product of European Cold War political geography, as "countries within the Soviet bloc were not considered because they do not participate in this program." Yet, the mayor and his special committee also expressed their desire to develop a relationship that would be most representative of the city's ethnic heritage and "in keeping with Milwaukee's traditions." Noting that "over 117,000 Milwaukeeans reported Germany as their country of origin" in the 1960 census, the committee felt that a German city (later decided to be Munich) would represent Milwaukee's prevailing German heritage—"one in which a large number of Milwaukeeans would feel right at home."[4] The Maier administration framed this endeavor as a way for Milwaukee to do its Cold War duty in developing "people-to-people" connections to foster cultural exchange and business relationships that might reduce the likelihood of another World War. However, they also saw such a partnership with a German city as an opportunity to connect the city's heritage renewal efforts to "the source" of authentic Germanness, and firmly root their nostalgic visions of Old Milwaukee in the Old World.

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[4] Bert Mulroy, "Report to the People, WEMP" (Speech, January 16, 1965), Microfilm Reel 2, Speeches, Maier Records.

This chapter will consider the collaboration of Milwaukee's civic and business leaders between the 1960s and 1980s in the construction of a nostalgic ideal of Milwaukee's heritage and history, which they then worked to inscribe into the city's built environment as part of their endeavor to create and market a more tourist-friendly, economically viable, and "liveable" city. Just as Maier brought visions of what would become Summerfest back with him after experiencing Munich's Oktoberfest in 1961, he and other growth agents repeatedly turned to Germany for inspiration for their redevelopment projects, as well as specific cultural elements and physical features that they could incorporate. Although not overtly articulated, these efforts effectively secured white ethnic (especially German) privilege in the social warrant of Milwaukee. Emphases on European (German) ethnic identity in new downtown developments helped white ethnic descendants, who may or may not have still lived in the city, to think of the city as inherently "theirs." Not surprisingly, already existing and largely congruent lines of class and racial power had a tremendous impact on what nostalgic visions of the city looked like and how they were inscribed on the city's landscape. Visions of Old Milwaukee rooted in the Old World provided a framework through which white ethnic residents could understand a greater legitimacy of their "belonging" downtown over that of the poor and working-class people of color that "inherited" older surrounding industrial neighborhoods. Just as the placement and interpretation of historical objects in nostalgic displays effectively severed them from existing and ongoing social meanings and relationships, heritage renewal worked to sever parts of downtown from their meanings and relationships with the surrounding communities of color that used them, and tied them to the needs and influences of downtown development interests. This is not to say that heritage renewal went unchallenged in Milwaukee. In fact, different groups pushed back against specific nostalgic visions of the city and their reproduction downtown with

varying degrees of success. Yet, largely sporadic and disjointed, these protests failed to adequately question the larger project Milwaukee's growth boosters had envisioned.

Three foundational projects especially illuminate the downtown "heritage renewal" endeavors of Milwaukee's civic and business leaders between the 1960s and 1980s. First, the Milwaukee Public Museum's "Streets of Old Milwaukee" exhibit reveals the complex interactions of nostalgia and urban renewal as the exhibit celebrated the very thing it helped to destroy. It also physically produced a narrative framework that cultivated understandings of Milwaukee's Old World roots and nineteenth century heyday, which could be aesthetically implemented in the redevelopment of the real streets of Milwaukee. Second, the Maier Administration's engagement with the Sister City Program and pursuit of a formal relationship between Milwaukee and Munich imagined the city as inherently connected to Germany. Yet, when such efforts were challenged by Jewish and Polish residents concerned about what such a relationship with the home city of Nazism only twenty years earlier might symbolize, Maier undermined any further formal sister city endeavors, and, along with other growth advocates, maintained an informal relationship with Munich and other cities in Germany. Finally, revitalization plans for the areas of downtown surrounding the Milwaukee River demonstrate how planners and business interests turned to the Old World as a model for rethinking the river's role in Milwaukee's postindustrial growth. While initially envisioning a monumental downtown project, planners and business gradually scaled their plans back to produce the Old World Third Street entertainment district. A more coherent vision of the city's cultural identity emerged from these projects and was inscribed in Milwaukee's built environment: making an Old Milwaukee in the new, firmly rooted in the Old World.

"New Milwaukee"

What exactly did Maier mean when he referred to "the building of a new Milwaukee"?[5] Recent scholarship has described how, like many American cities, Milwaukee's civic and business leaders engaged in a variety of urban renewal projects designed to restructure the city to more effectively compete in the postwar economy. In addition to freeways and housing developments that extended throughout the city and quickly sprawling metropolitan area, these interests also desired a more modern and economically viable downtown business and entertainment district – the "Magnificent Mile" of Wisconsin Avenue – and initiated projects that included a modern civic center, convention center, and sports arena, among other developments, intended to bring Milwaukee up to par with other "great" American cities. As John McCarthy and Eric Fure-Slocum reveal in their recent and important contributions to the historiography of Milwaukee, however, new emphasis on downtown growth marked a tremendous shift away from the city's long tradition of municipal socialism and working-class politics. As McCarthy illustrates, Milwaukee's long-running Socialist administrations of the early-to-mid twentieth century shaped city planning and development as a means to improve the conditions of its dense and growing population of industrial workers, committing to outward expansion and annexation of surrounding communities as the city's primary mode of growth between the 1920s and 1950s. By the mid-1950s, however, an "iron ring" of suburbs, as city officials described it, blocked further annexations, ceasing further city expansion, and downtown business leaders clamoring for new development investments in the aging city center organized the Greater Milwaukee

[5] "New Museum Wing Revives Memories," 7.

Commission (GMC) to more aggressively lobby for their interests and turn the city's development attention downtown.[6]

Eric Fure-Slocum argues that this also marked a notable and contentious shift from working-class politics to an ascendant "growth politics" in Milwaukee as business interests supplanted those of organized labor in shaping the culture of the city's administration and development. In order to advance their vision of a modern and more economically viable city, Fure Slocum notes, "Business and civic leaders had to excavate, remove, and reconstruct the political culture of the industrial city."[7] This meant both divestment from more democratic forms of Milwaukee's public infrastructure, like its expansive streetcar network, and the relegation of organized labor as merely one interest group among many in the city.[8] These endeavors largely coincided with what Tula Connell describes as a larger conservative counterrevolutionary movement to "undo 'the socialization of the American character,'" where Milwaukee, with its strong labor movement and socialist municipal administrations, had become a key battleground. No longer willing to share power with workers and their allies in shaping the city's postwar political and economic landscape, Connell argues, the city's business interests embarked on a fifty-year project to advance an individualist, aggressive, anti-union, free-market-based conservative agenda. "The formula that conservatives developed in Milwaukee effectively contested notions of the common good that had undergirded Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal order," Connell explains.[9] While certainly referring to expanding renewal efforts, "New Milwaukee" also meant a more conservative, pro-business political order.

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[6] John M. McCarthy, *Making Milwaukee Mightier: Planning and the Politics of Growth, 1910-1960* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009).
[7] Fure-Slocum, *Contesting the Postwar City*, 5.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Connell, *Conservative Counterrevolution: Challenging Liberalism in 1950s Milwaukee*, 2–3.

Although McCarthy and Fure-Slocum's narratives both stop at or before 1960, which marked the end of Frank Zeidler's administration, the last of Milwaukee's twentieth century Socialist mayors, their implications can certainly be extended through the remainder of the twentieth century, and even be discerned up to the present. "For forty years, the goal of the Greater Milwaukee Committee and its political allies has been to keep the city from falling behind other industrial cities across the country by initiating downtown projects to facilitate transportation, shopping, and entertainment," Jack Norman noted in a 1989 essay. "During this time, the public sector has played a tag-along role, mainly funneling federal dollars into private development."[10] As Norman suggests and McCarthy and Fure-Slocum confirm, the public-private partnership in urban restructuring often associated with the "neoliberal turn" of the 1970s, had already started to take off in Milwaukee in the years immediately following the Second World War. Business leaders, organized first as the 1948 Corporation that later became the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC), worked with city officials to efforts bring Milwaukee's aging downtown up to par with other cities through major development projects, like an expanded Civic Center that included a new museum and updated library facilities, an indoor arena, and an improved downtown retail and entertainment district.

The GMC's growth politics and public-private restructuring efforts were even further bolstered after 1960 with the administration of Mayor Henry W. Maier, who, according to one case study of his administration, "emphasized economic development before most cities were even thinking of it."[11] Remaining in office from 1960 to 1988—an unprecedented twenty-eight years as Milwaukee's mayor—the Maier administration partnered with the GMC in pursuit of its

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[10] Norman, "Congenial Milwaukee," 178.
[11] Martin Gruberg, *A Case Study in U.S. Urban Leadership: The Incumbency of Milwaukee Mayor Henry Maier* (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1996), 129.

visions of a downtown renaissance, and promoted a wide array of new downtown developments during his administration, including the Milwaukee Exposition Convention Center and Arena (MECCA), the Performing Arts Center, and even failed plans for a downtown tourist center and observation tower. "Of the 266 acres of land cleared during the 1960s and early 1970s," Norman notes, "56 percent was used for residential development, 30 percent for business development, and 14 percent for expansion on the campus of Marquette University, just west of downtown. Downtown projects included the development of office space and construction of high-rise, higher-rent apartments."[12] During Maier's tenure as mayor, Milwaukee's downtown and surrounding areas underwent a massive transition from an industrial to a tourist and service-based economy. It was in this context that the Streets of Old Milwaukee and Old World Third Street were developed.

Scholars from a variety of fields have revealed the many ways power brokers repeatedly and unevenly reshaped urban American landscapes and manipulated cultural forms to secure their class power and ensure that cities remained productive and profitable to their interests. In his revival of Henri Lefebvre's essay, "The Right to the City," David Harvey argues that capital accumulation and the absorption of surplus produced in pursuit of perpetual growth drove such "creative destruction"—the continuous reshaping of urban spaces to secure or create new markets, resources, commodities, and labor supplies. Citing the restructuring of Paris under Haussmann during the Second Empire and New York under Robert Moses after the Second World War, Harvey notes that urban power brokers engaged in vast programs of physical transformation in times of economic crisis to change the fabric of urban life towards ensuring

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[12] Norman, "Congenial Milwaukee," 187.

that the city continues to absorb surplus capital in the form of new products and services.[13] In the post-industrial, neoliberal age, Harvey explains, this has meant a commodification of urban life, with greater emphasis on "consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries, as well as perpetual resort to the economy of the spectacle."[14] Both the avid protection of private property rights and values (the physical and symbolic enclosure of urban spaces) and the creation of elaborate debt regimes (through micro-credit and micro-finance "empowerment" loans) has further fragmented and polarized urban communities, increasing the power and wealth of the elite by effectively dispossessing urban residents of their right to occupy urban space and access its resources—much less to "change and reinvent the city more after [their] hearts' desire."[15] The unevenly administered violence of these efforts often relied on narratives of belonging and rights to legitimate the reproduction of power in urban space. As Neil Smith reveals, for instance, New York developers effectively employed powerful and familiar narratives of the frontier to frame their gentrification efforts in the 1980s. Smith explains that developers invoked notions of Manifest Destiny, depicting their redevelopment of working-class neighborhoods for more up-scaled use as pioneers taming a wild urban environment devoid of any meaningful civilization. Existing communities were marginalized as savage and undeserving compared to the rightful claims of the more civilized "gentrifiers" who knew how to appropriately use the space.[16]

Urban restructuring schemes of the late-twentieth century also engaged in the production and manipulation of heritage, nostalgia, and tradition—turning objects and places of historic or sentimental importance into vehicles for commercial and entertainment enterprise and promoting

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[13] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2012), 6–10.
[14] Ibid., quote 14, 10-15.
[15] Ibid., 4, 15–21.
[16] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 12–29.

the city as a valuable destination. "While it looks old, heritage is actually something new … a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past." Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues. "Heritage … depends on display to give dying economies and dead cities a second life as exhibitions of themselves. A place such as Salem, Massachusetts, may be even more profitable as an exhibition of a mercantile center than it was as a mercantile center."[17] Often neatly packaged, comforting, and self-affirming, these nostalgic cultural productions, in turn, largely superseded messy, upsetting, and subversive historical actualities and ideologies, and contributed to prevailing understandings of community belonging.[18] As Matthew Frye Jacobson explains, for instance, the Ellis Island restoration project was imagined in part as a nostalgic theme park and part sacred pilgrimage place, drawing between ten and fifteen thousand visitors per day to the New York Harbor national heritage site by the 1990s. Established amid the late-twentieth century "ethnic revival," Jacobson argues that the Ellis Island project cultivated important visions of white ethnicity and the nation. In celebrating the hardships and later triumphs of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century European immigrants that came through its gates, the Ellis Island affirmed the national mythology of the deserving, hard-working immigrants who pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, over the "supposed welfare-mongers of the present-day ghetto."[19] Similarly, in her analysis of the Lowell National History Park, Cathy Stanton notes, "There is a clear pattern to the choices and omissions reflected in park interpretation [of history], … ultimately shaped by the park's role within the city's broader revitalization effort, which works in many ways to support the celebratory multiculturalism and

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[17] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 3, 7.
[18] Ibid., 7–8.
[19] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 59–69.

narrative of economic rebirth on which the city's reinvented identity is based."[20] Although memorializing the nation's early industrial history, Stanton argues, the park's developers and historical interpreters severed their stories from ongoing industrial work and class struggles in the region. The Lowell heritage project thus "came to praise *and* to bury," Stanton claims, "to extol the workers whose labor created these places and frame that labor as something essentially finished."[21]

Scholars like Judith Kenny and Jeffrey Zimmerman, among others, have begun to explore the ways city officials and growth interests engaged such forms of heritage and nostalgia in Milwaukee's post-industrial restructuring. As Kenny and Zimmerman argue, the Greater Milwaukee Convention and Visitors Bureau and other civic "image-makers" employed nostalgic images of the city's industrial past to advertise Milwaukee as "The Genuine American City" in the 1980s and 1990s. These boosters painted the city as a hot new destination with traditional, middle-class values that might draw tourists and the itinerant technology and design workers of what Richard Florida calls the "creative class" who sought an "authentic" urban experience.[22] Kenny and Zimmerman explain that these representations also played important roles in the marketing and design of New Urbanist, mixed-use condominiums and retail centers that were developed on old industrial sites and converted factory buildings around downtown.[23] Zimmerman, Steven Hoelscher, and Timothy Bawden have also started to illuminate the

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[20] Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), xiv.
[21] Ibid., xii–xiii.
[22] Judith T. Kenny and Jeffrey Zimmerman, "Constructing the 'Genuine American City': Neo-Traditionalism, New Urbanism and Neo-Liberalism in the Remaking of Downtown Milwaukee," *Cultural Geographies* 11, no. 1 (January 2004): 76–80; Judith T. Kenny, "Making Milwaukee Famous: Cultural Capital, Urban Image, and the Politics of Place," *Urban Geography* 16, no. 5 (July 1, 1995): 445–48; Jeffrey Zimmerman, "From Brew Town to Cool Town: Neoliberalism and the Creative City Development Strategy in Milwaukee," *Cities* 25, no. 4 (August 2008): 230–42.
[23] Kenny and Zimmerman, "Constructing the 'Genuine American City,'" 80–87.

important roles Germanness played in historic preservation efforts and the creation of festival marketplaces and new postmodern developments in downtown Milwaukee in the 1970s through 1990s. This "second renaissance" did not necessarily reflect a real resurgence of German identity among Milwaukeeans, but rather the appropriation of Milwaukee's German heritage as "cultural capital" for the reinvention of the city as a destination. "As a source of physical relics and images from which to launch a redevelopment campaign, Milwaukee's German Golden Age proved irresistible," they argue. "Developers, architects, and local boosters have selectively refashioned historical *images* into architectural facades or pastiches of local history."[24] These works provide an important basis for understanding how growth interests pursued German ethnic heritage and nostalgia for the city's nineteenth century industrial glory days in their efforts to reinvent the late-twentieth century city, as well as the ways these endeavors reproduced race and class lines in Milwaukee's landscape. Focused primarily on the 1980s through the early 2000s, however, they miss the important foundations for these projects in earlier decades—particularly the Maier administration's efforts to establish new links between Milwaukee and Germany in the context of the Cold War.

Historians of Milwaukee have alluded to a long history of European influence in the city's architecture, planning, and development. Susan K. Appel, for instance, reveals how German brewers not only brought German beer styles and brewing techniques with them to Milwaukee, but also modeled their massive industrial breweries after their counterparts in Germany, designed by German architects.[25] William George Bruce, Richard Perrin, and others have traced the ways German-born architects, like Henry Koch and Alfred C. Clas, injected

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[24] Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," 394–95.
[25] Appel, "Building Milwaukee's Breweries."

German Classicism, as well as influences from urban planning efforts in Paris, London, and other major European cities, into the city's late-nineteenth and early twentieth century City Beautiful movement.[26] As John McCarthy reveals, Milwaukee's socialist administrations similarly looked to incorporated progressive European urban planning schemes, like Ebenezer Howard's vision for the English Garden City, into their early twentieth century decentralization and social restructuring efforts.[27] However, these considerations do not extend to the continued efforts of city officials and growth interests to import Old World aesthetics in their schemes to appropriate and commodify German ethnic identity in the reshaping of the city's downtown in the late twentieth century.

The Streets of Old Milwaukee

Opening with great fanfare and "record crowds" on January 15, 1965, the "Streets of Old Milwaukee" was the first permanent exhibit of the new Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) building in the Civic Center redevelopment area, and remains a prominent and popular feature of the museum to this day. A greatly expanded version of a nineteenth century barbershop and drugstore exhibit in the old museum space in the Central Library building, the new exhibit featured a series of three short "streets" that curved through a large exhibit hall, lined with the different-styled facades of three-quarter-scaled "buildings" that portrayed various shops and homes of the city's past.[28] Designed to provide museumgoers with an immersive and "authentic"

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[26] William George Bruce, *History of Milwaukee, City and County*, vol. 1 (Milwaukee: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), 481–555; Richard W. E. Perrin, "Resurgent Classicism: Wisconsin Architecture in the Wake of the Columbian Exposition," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 46, no. 2 (Winter 1962-1963): 118–123; McCarthy, *Making Milwaukee Mightier*, 3–40.
[27] McCarthy, *Making Milwaukee Mightier*, 49–53.
[28] Nancy Oestreich Lurie, *A Special Style: The Milwaukee Public Museum, 1882-1982* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1983), 111.

experience of what everyday life was like in "turn-of-the-century Milwaukee," the MPM's Streets exhibit was a revolutionary innovation in the general field of museum exhibit design. The exhibit followed a Disney-like model that combined a cleaned-up, nostalgic version of the city's past with the safety of a modern museum facility and highly theatrical, spectacle-based amusement. The Streets exhibit might, therefore, be understood as an important step towards, or experiment in, a "Disnification" of American cities that urban historians have illuminated elsewhere. "The visitor literally steps into the past of a fall evening, following wooded sidewalks along brick paved streets to glance into the windows of homes and businesses of a gaslight era neighborhood," Lurie describes, which she dubs as the exhibit's "*gemütlich* appeal," referring to the German sense of good-natured fun and joviality.[29] The exhibit's development in the mid-1960s and subsequent evolution provides a valuable window, at a very critical juncture, into what was being fashioned as "Old Milwaukee" – quite literally in this case – and what specific agents were involved in this process. Moreover, the narratives that newspaper media constructed around the exhibit help illuminate the greater relevance they imagined the Streets exhibit had on the real streets of Milwaukee.

Among the museum staff most directly involved in the development and construction of the exhibit were the museum's in-house artist and designer, Ed Green. According to a *Milwaukee Journal* report on his retirement from the museum in 1984, Green was "a Milwaukee native whose father operated a grocery store on National Ave.," and "a widely exhibited artist as well as architectural designer" who served as a "member of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission, the Milwaukee Art Commission, the Museum Artisans Guild, and the Wisconsin Painters and

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[29] Ibid.

Sculptors."[30] Green's pioneering work in "environmental installations" like the Streets of Old Milwaukee, among others at the Milwaukee Public Museum, was very well known and influential. "His innovative lighting and display techniques unashamedly copied by similar institutions in the US and elsewhere," the *Journal* reported, including "'The Streets of Old Victoria,' subsequently put up in the natural history museum at Victoria, British Columbia."[31]

Along with the museum's director, Stephan F. Borhegyi, and assistant curator of history, Robert Lietz, Green compiled materials for his design from the community itself. A *Journal* article celebrating the exhibit's twentieth anniversary explains that a large amount of the exhibit's contents came from the donation of old household objects "from Milwaukee attics and cellars and old, horsehair trunks."[32] This offered an opportunity for Milwaukee residents to not only meaningfully contribute to the museum's collection, but also claim connections to Old Milwaukee. Old family items like shaving mugs, watches, and dolls could take on new meanings when they were removed from the anonymity of storage and publicly displayed in a museum exhibit.

Borhegyi, Green, and Lietz also collected materials for the buildings and the streets themselves from structures marked for demolition in urban renewal zones.[33] The houses and commercial buildings the city planned to clear for the Park East Freeway – from the predominantly black near north side to the lower east side – especially served as a significant cache for the Streets exhibit.[34] As Green recalls in the *Journal Sentinel's* 2000 obituary for Lietz,

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[30] James Auer, "Retiring Museum Designer Leaves Mark," *Milwaukee Journal*, May 25, 1984, Accent, p. 10.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Alicia Armstrong, "These Streets Really Belong in a Museum," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 2, 1985, sec. 2, p. 3.
[33] Lurie, *Special Style*, 111.
[34] Armstrong, "These Streets Really Belong in a Museum," 3; Amy Rabideau Silvers, "Lietz Helped Establish Public Museum," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, December 4, 2000, 4B.

"Bob and I would get items from the houses and incorporate them into the houses on the street," including doors, doorknobs, stained glass, and moldings.[35] Lietz, Green, and the exhibit's other creators similarly acquired old cobblestones and granite pavers from the city that were excavated from various road projects.[36] The Streets of Old Milwaukee exhibit was, therefore, literally built from pieces of Milwaukee's historic built environment that Green and the other exhibit creators carefully selected and preserved for inclusion in a symbolic representation of that built environment. "It really added a credibility and authenticity to the buildings," Museum Exhibits Director Jim Kelly told the *Journal Sentinel* in 2000. "Those historical exhibits just seem to patina with age."[37]

In this way, the development and construction of the Streets of Old Milwaukee exhibit played a complex and somewhat contradictory role in the city's mid-century restructuring. Through their efforts to use and display materials significant and unique to Milwaukee's past, the museum preserved pieces of the historic built environment that might have otherwise been lost to urban renewal projects that cleared entire aging neighborhoods. However, these efforts also strangely participated in the "creative destruction" of that historic built environment. By collaborating with city officials and demolition crews to excavate materials for the exhibit, the exhibit's creators helped destroy actually authentic urban spaces in order to reorganize and manipulate them into a contrived authentic urban space in a brand-new, large, and modern museum building. This is further complicated by the development of the museum as an urban renewal project for which several aging structures were razed, as well. "Despite joyful anticipation of a new museum," Lurie notes, "many [museum] staff members regretted the

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[35] Silvers, "Lietz Helped Establish Public Museum," 4B.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

passing of favorite old haunts," like the Dugout Tavern, a mom-and-pop grocery, and the White Tower hamburger emporium.[38]

For many, however, it was this authenticity of historic materials and contents that gave the exhibit a "feeling" of authenticity and nostalgic power. "The streets are not real, of course," the 1985 *Journal* article celebrating the exhibit's twentieth anniversary notes, "but when you are strolling along the indoor Grand Ave. and Chestnut and Biddle Sts., they seem real." What made them "seem" real was the manipulation of historic materials to fit nostalgic expectations: "They are red brick, granite-block, and cedar-block streets with board sidewalks – the kind of streets that Milwaukeeans walked down at the turn of the century."[39] This suggests that the power of the exhibit's historic contents was not merely in their presence, but in the exhibit creators' selection and manipulation of them to reproduce an idealized vision of the city's past. As the *Journal's* report on the exhibit's grand opening celebration in January 1965 notes, "Wandering along the cedar blocks or bricks of the old town, an eavesdropper heard repeatedly, 'I remember…' or 'Do you remember…?'" The loss of true authenticity in the urban space they constructed did not matter to museumgoers as Green and Lietz physically manifested the nostalgic version of the city that they had expected, that prevailed in the memories of the city's established white ethnic residents. It also did not matter whether or not they pegged down a specific time period for their reproduction. Civil War-era items and structures are displayed alongside those of the 1880s and the early twentieth century. In the softness of this periodization, most depictions describe the exhibit as portraying "turn-of-the-century Milwaukee." This further reinforces the reading of the Streets exhibit, not as historical reproduction, but as memory reproduction.

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[38] Lurie, *Special Style*, 82.
[39] Armstrong, "These Streets Really Belong in a Museum," 3.

Moreover, by selecting what physical objects were to be included and excluded, and what things were to be reproduced and what was not, the Streets exhibit also helped solidify what this imagined, nostalgic version of Milwaukee's past looked like. Replicas of various businesses dominated much of the exhibit's space—many of which were common to American urban environments, like a general store, apothecary, dentist, photography studio, nickelodeon, and locksmith, among others. However, the names of major area businesses with historic roots in the community helped connect these ubiquitous urban institutions specifically to Milwaukee's past. Besides collecting material donations for use in the exhibit, the museum provided an innovative framework for such local business connections, opening the different shop displays for sponsorship from historic businesses and their descendants to offset the cost of the exhibit's construction. With a sponsorship and material donation from the local medical supply company, Laabs, Inc., for instance, the exhibit's apothecary became Otto Laabs' Drugstore—a reference to the company's actual origins on Vliet Street in 1898.[40] Sponsorships from other familiar local establishments, like the Klode Furniture Company, George Watts & Son china and glass shop, and Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, are also represented in the signs that mark otherwise ambiguous structures. As the Laabs pharmacy exhibit indicates, however, sponsorships and material donations from local businesses of German origin particularly played an important role in the museum's construction—suggested by the prominent placement of Fred Usinger's Sausage Company, Mader's Restaurant, and the Pfister Hotel in the exhibit. The Schlitz Brewing Company, who had increasingly used their Old Milwaukee brand in their civic contributions, was the largest contributor to the exhibit's construction. In addition to their

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[40] Dorothy Kincaid, "Have You Heard?," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 8, 1965, sec. 1, p. 4; Royal Brevväxling, "Laabs Pharmacy Still Serves Milwaukee After 113 Years," *OnMilwaukee.com*, accessed August 27, 2014, http://onmilwaukee.com/market/articles/laabs.html.

donations to the entire project, they sponsored a Schlitz Saloon prominently placed on one of the Streets' corners, and hosted the grand opening celebration where Robert A. Uihlein, Jr., was one of the ribbon cutters for the exhibit.[41]

The wide support for the exhibit among local business owners indicates that they had an acute understanding of the combined power of nostalgia and civic contribution for their brand names. However, the predominant emphasis on commercial and leisure businesses in the exhibit and the readiness of the museum to turn their historical work over to private interests suggests a much larger shift toward public-private partnership in the new museum that reflected a similar shift in larger American cities, like New York.[42] Such a sponsorship framework made "good business sense" all around. Contributing businesses established prominently displayed advertising for presumably as long as the exhibit remained, and the museum was able to pay the bills for the exhibits construction. However, by including Schlitz, Usingers, Pfister, Laabs, and other sponsors that remained active and familiar establishments in the city, it also secured a special place for these businesses, and "Good Germanness" more generally, in the imagination of Old Milwaukee. This further problematizes claims to the exhibit's authenticity or historical accuracy, as sponsoring businesses were included, and thus given a more prominent place in the memory of Old Milwaukee, over those establishments that did not choose to sponsor or might not have survived into the midcentury. Moreover, the exhibit's focus on commercial space completely left out immensely significant institutions of actual everyday life in Milwaukee's past—churches, social centers, union halls, public schools, workers cottages—elements that embodied key conflicts that might have challenged the nostalgic narrative.

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[41] Kincaid, "Have You Heard?," 4; "New Museum Wing Revives Memories," 7.
[42] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 39–63.

Constructing the Streets of Old Milwaukee, therefore, might not only be understood as an exercise in the physical reproduction of nostalgia, but also as a vision for the city's future. Mayor Henry Maier said as much in his remarks during the exhibit's opening ceremony, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.[43] However, the past that was informing Milwaukee's future in the Streets of Old Milwaukee was not its factories, churches, social clubs, and certainly not its unions. In its earliest form, the exhibit also presented a past completely devoid of African Americans, who had maintained a presence in the city since its origins, and had grown in population by the turn-of-the century. The past that the exhibit expressed was the consumer and leisure economy that it not only displayed prominently in a museum setting, but also invited visitors to become immersed in and interact with. It expressed a cleaned-up and nostalgic history, rooted in material objects, and selected for its comfort and safety—removed from the dirt, smell, and conflict of the actual past. The exhibit's exclusive whiteness and its darkly lit streets also invited visitors to imagine the city removed from the racial conflicts of the present, and to "remember" a time when Milwaukee was safe at night—a nostalgic and mythical sense of safety perceived as inherent in a homogeneously white community. The Streets of Old Milwaukee, therefore, was a vision of the city that planners hoped to repackage and reproduce on the actual streets of Milwaukee.

Since opening in 1965, the Streets of Old Milwaukee exhibit was updated with several new innovations in museum technology, and additions to its collection of businesses. These additions often included an "opening party" of business members, museum staff, and other local elites. In 1967, the Conrad Schmitt stained glass and religious art studio donated $6,000 to add a display featuring their business to the exhibit. Established as a small studio on Grand Avenue in

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[43] "New Museum Wing Revives Memories," 7.

1887, Conrad Schmitt had turned into an internationally known business by 1967, and "about 100 members of the studio and museum staffs and their guests attended an opening party in the museum," according to the *Journal*.[44] In 1968, the museum introduced the pioneering "By-Word Message Sound System," a cordless headset system that visitors could rent ($.50 for adults, $.25 for children) to "hear the sounds of the past."[45] As they walked around the exhibit with the headset, visitors could "eavesdrop" on thirty different "scenes," like "a little boy flapping a stick against a picket fence and a barroom conversation which may have taken place in the 1890s," which were recorded for the museum at the Yale School of Drama. Once again, this new technology was first previewed at a party of "about 350 government officials and civic leaders."[46] Additions to the exhibit continued into the late 1990s when the museum added a new building, sponsored by the Roundy's Corporation, representing the regional grocery chain's origins in the city's past. As museum curator John Lundstrom told the *Journal Sentinel*, "With awnings and big, friendly windows, the store was designed to look like 'a Roundy's from about the 1880s.'"[47] While the *Journal Sentinel* did not report what kind of financial contribution the company had made to the museum for the addition, they did note that Roundy's donated a clock that was rescued from the store during the 1892 Third Ward fire.[48]

By highlighting specific features of the exhibit and developing nostalgic narratives around them in their coverage of the various additions to, and anniversaries of, the Streets of Old Milwaukee, newspaper media augmented and propagated the power behind the version of

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[44] "Museum's Old Milwaukee Adds Noted Shop of Glass," *Milwaukee Journal*, October 13, 1967, sec. 2, p. 3.
[45] "Ad: Streets of Old Milwaukee," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 29, 1968, "Old Milwaukee Days" Supplement, p. 5.
[46] Charlie House, "Museum Tunes in Sounds of Past," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 25, 1968, sec. 2, p. 1.
[47] Jackie Loohauis, "New Address on Museum's 'Streets' Shows Grocer's Past," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, February 18, 1998, 8B.
[48] Ibid.

Milwaukee's past that the exhibit embodied. These narratives most often compared the memories expressed in the exhibit with various contemporary issues, emphasizing a sense that something important was lost in the transition from Old Milwaukee to modern Milwaukee—advancing an understanding of twentieth century Milwaukee as a story of decline. For instance, as the *Journal* article celebrating the exhibit's twentieth anniversary in 1985 notes, "There's a sign in the window of the old Comfort Restaurant telling you that you can get dinner there for 20 cents," asserting that, "Even if inflation goes crazy again, that price will not change."[49] The same article also points to the "dark-haired manikin with a mustache [that] tends bar in the saloon, ready to serve beer from the dear departed Jos. Schlitz Brewing Co."—indicating that Schlitz's decision to close its Milwaukee plant and sell out to Stroh's was akin to a death in the family.[50] However, Schlitz could ultimately live on in the institutionalized nostalgia of the Streets exhibit. This *Journal* article also emphasized the feeling of comfort that the Streets exhibit provided its visitors. "Everything remains the same in the Streets of Old Milwaukee," the *Journal* maintains. "Your personal problems don't mean a thing there, because you are in another time and another place that will never threaten you with sorrow or with joy that can turn to sorrow."[51] By presenting the Streets exhibit as this kind of "Mayberry" where everything is always pleasant and nothing ever changes, the *Journal* helps elevate this vision of the past—Old Milwaukee—that was much better than the present city. Moreover, by suggesting that the Streets represented a very different time and place, the *Journal* indicates that it did not matter how fictional this vision Old Milwaukee was, it was an appealing concept that readers and museumgoers could project on their past and aspire for their future.

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[49] Armstrong, "These Streets Really Belong in a Museum," 3.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

In December 1979, MPM opened a new permanent exhibit, the "European Village," next door to the Streets of Old Milwaukee. Like the Streets, this new exhibit featured thirty-two structures that each represented different European cultures, collected in an immersive and idealized village setting. Museumgoers were invited to stroll through the cobblestone streets of this quaint village and look in through the windows of the various homes or shops to see representations of the traditions, skills, and daily lives of different European ethnic cultures. These displays were constructed with distinct cultural materials and "scenes" staged with mannequins in each home. In the French House, for instance, visitors can see a woman baking baguettes in a downstairs shop, while a man paints in an upstairs window. A large collection of beer steins marks another prominent structure as the German House. Similar representations were created highlighting comparable elements of food, clothing, music, art and other features among Belgians, Danes, Irish, Italians, Jews, Lithuanians, Norwegians, Poles, and a range of several other European cultures.[52]

The museum also intended for the Village to speak to Milwaukee's past. As the *Journal* reported on the exhibit's opening, the museum selected the cultures and a temporal framework most meaningful to the heritages of the city's different European ethnic communities. "The tiny little homes and shops, furnished with impeccable detail, are representative of the ones in use in Europe between 1875 and 1925, when the vast majority of Milwaukee's immigrant population came here to settle," the *Journal* explained.[53] Like the Streets, the Village featured materials donated to the museum from area residents, further connecting the exhibit to Milwaukee's ethnic

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[52] "They're 'Giving Birth' to Village," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 27, 1978, sec. 1, p. 13; Alice Anne Conner, "Debut: Museum Village a Stunner," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 7, 1979, sec. 2, pp. 1, 7.
[53] Conner, "Debut: Museum Village a Stunner," 1.

communities and bolstering its claims to authenticity. Moreover, the exhibit's development was also made possible through donations from wealthy individuals, foundations, and area corporations. Among the most significant donors was the Pabst Brewing Company, which is the only corporate name featured in the exhibit itself—the Pabst Village Square.

The addition of the Village exhibit contributed significantly to the narrative constructed in the Streets of Old Milwaukee. Although much of the material used in these displays were genuine artifacts or convincing replicas, they were arranged to produce what amounted to cultural caricatures—stylized images of the cultures they were depicting—that emphasized common and non-threatening elements, like food, clothing, music, art. When viewed as a whole, the Village presents a very uncomplicated vision of European history, combining representations of national cultures into one, peaceful and pleasant village. The current MPM website claims that "the Village does not attempt to explain the influence these various European cultures have had on each other," but rather "take[s] unity in diversity as its theme and message."[54] In other words, the Village constructs an ideal vision of the Old World without the war, genocide, massive social, political, and economic restructuring that generated the migration of European ethnic communities to the United States, offering cultural celebrations of white ethnicity as the panacea for contemporary problems. Moreover, the Village was seamlessly connected to the Streets of Old Milwaukee, with almost no sign of moving from one exhibit to the next. Visitors were invited to not only physically travel from the imagined Old World to the imagined historic Milwaukee without any hardships of the historic voyage, but to also comfortably and repeatedly pass between the two ideals—effectively blurring space and time. This connection portrays an

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[54] "European Village," *Milwaukee Public Museum Website*, August 7, 2012, http://www.mpm.edu/european-village-0.

inherent link between the Old World and Old Milwaukee, with white ethnicity held up as the natural path between the two. By contrast, the Streets of Old Milwaukee was on a completely different floor from the museum's exhibits of African, Latin and South American, and Native American history and culture—quite literally severing the pathways between people of color and the city.

Old World "Sisters"

As the Streets of Old Milwaukee reinforced narrative links between the city and European (especially German) heritage, the Cold War and increasing globalization provided unique opportunities and motivations for Milwaukee to establish new relationships with Europe. Among the most significant ways they worked to create new connections was through "sister cities" programs. Encouraged by the U.S. State Department and facilitated by non-profit agencies, many American cities began establishing "sister city" relationships with Western European cities that aimed to promote cultural and economic exchange, and strengthen U.S.-Western European alliances against the Soviet Eastern Bloc. Milwaukee Mayor Henry Maier's efforts to establish a sister city for Milwaukee simultaneously emphasized the historic connections of Old Milwaukee and the Old World, embodied here in a symbolic relationship, and highlighted the benefits to the city's reputation and economic future that such a cultural exchange program might bring. However, the Maier administration's efforts to establish a sister city relationship between Milwaukee and Munich in the early-to-mid 1960s resulted in a major public battle over the meanings of such connections to a multi-ethnic city like Milwaukee that lasted for nearly three decades. On one level, this battle exhibited growing diversity in the city's power dynamics, as other ethnic groups openly challenged the city's prevailing German cultural

hegemony. On another level, however, it reveals both a continuation of that hegemony and efforts by city officials to more securely entrench Germanness in the city's late twentieth century restructuring.[55]

In October 1961, Maier was appointed as a representative of the U.S. Conference of Mayors to lead an American Heritage Foundation delegation of civic, business, and labor leaders to Europe to inspect the Radio Free Europe facilities in Munich and Lisbon and other "critical Western outposts in the Cold War."[56] The delegation's itinerary included an "all-day visit to [the] 'Iron Curtain' on [the] West German border of Czechoslovakia," tours of the Radio Free Europe headquarters in Munich and broadcast facilities in Lisbon, a briefing from a NATO officer, and a quick trip to West Berlin to visit Mayor Willy Brandt, scheduled at the last minute.[57] Maier's trip received quite a bit of attention in the local press, and provided a special moment for the city to experience Cold War conditions in Europe as reported back through their mayor. There was also a significant amount of meaning perceived in Maier's participation in the delegation and Milwaukee's historic German population and its cultural connections to Germany. As part of their resolution of greetings to Mayor Willy Brandt and the people of West Berlin for Maier to deliver on his trip, for instance, the Milwaukee Common Council explained, "The government and the citizens of Milwaukee have a long and continuing interest in the traditions and culture of Germany and its great cities," offering an invitation to Mayor Brandt to visit Milwaukee.[58]

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[55] Wilbur Zelinsky, "The Twinning of the World: Sister Cities in Geographic and Historical Perspective," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81, no. 1 (March 1991): 1–31; Rolf D. Cremer, Anne De Bruin, and Ann Dupuis, "International Sister-Cities: Bridging the Global-Local Divide," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 60, no. 1 (January 2001): 377–401.
[56] "Berlin Contrasts Incredible: Maier," 3.
[57] Henry W. Maier to Walter K. Scott, September 22, 1961, box 78, folder 25, Maier Records; "Berlin Contrasts Incredible: Maier."
[58] "Milwaukee Common Council Resolution Draft."

Presumably with these connections in mind, Maier had a secondary mission in mind while in Europe: to lay the groundwork for a sister city relationship between Milwaukee and Munich. In the weeks before the trip, Maier's staff consulted outside agencies familiar with Munich and the sister city program, and formulated a plan to make a good impression with Munich city officials and start preliminary discussions without appearing too eager. In one memo to the mayor, staff assistant Frank Campenni reported that Munich Mayor Hans-Jochen Vogel "is very highly thought of, young (about 38) and speaks English very well. Also, he is a Civil War 'buff,' and I think we should present him with material related to this interest—books, albums, prints, replicas or such material."[59] And, indeed, the mayor's staff shipped a series of American Civil War books to Munich ahead of the delegation for Maier to present to Vogel when they met, along with "a scroll from the Milwaukee Council, inviting his German counterpart to come to this city" and "an inscribed key to the City of Milwaukee."[60]

Local press coverage of the meeting between Maier and Vogel in Munich, fed by Maier "in a trans-Atlantic telephone conversation," also emphasized existing cultural similarities between the two cities, and noted the possibility of a more formal relationship. "Having concluded their serious discussion on world affairs, Mayor Henry W. Maier of Milwaukee and Mayor Hans-Jochen Vogel of Munich, Germany, had a 'friendly argument' on the subject of beer," a *Sentinel* article reported. "Both made the same claim—that their city was 'the beer capitol of the world.' Maier made a big 'pitch' for Milwaukee, and his congenial host filed an equally strong claim for Munich. 'Let's say Munich makes the beer that makes Milwaukee jealous,' joked Vogel after Maier assured him that he would not retreat from his position."[61] The

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[59] F. Campenni to Mayor Maier, September 22, 1961, box 78, folder 25, Maier Records.
[60] Carey, "Maier Defends Our Beer!," 1–2.
[61] Ibid.

Sentinel also reported that Maier and Vogel agreed to explore a possible sister city relationship, and that Munich's famous Oktoberfest celebration might serve as a significant piece of cultural exchange. "I think the City of Milwaukee should seriously consider the possibility of having an Oktoberfest like they do over here," Maier told the *Sentinel* by phone. "I invited Mayor Vogel to come to Milwaukee and tell us how to do it."[62] Maier's experiences with Munich's Oktoberfest in October 1961 served as a major inspiration for the development of Milwaukee's Summerfest.

While he may have reached some level of agreement with Mayor Vogel in 1961, Maier recognized that he would not be able to establish a sister city relationship with Munich without going through proper channels, including approval of the Milwaukee Common Council and at least some appearance of objectivity. "While I feel that city-to-city and people-to-people programs merit the support of our citizens and local governments, I want to stress that any discussions in Munich would be completely informal in nature," Maier wrote to Walter Scott, the Consul General at the American Consulate in Munich, before his trip. "Should the officials and citizens of Munich prove receptive to a 'sister city' arrangement, I would then take up the feasibility of such an arrangement with the legislative body and interested civic groups in the City of Milwaukee."[63]

Maier finally organized a Sister City Committee in August 1964, charged with formally investigating such a relationship and recommending a foreign city that would be appropriate to become Milwaukee's sister.[64] Despite appearances of objectivity to the committee's assignment, the mayor appointed representatives from prominent German societies in Milwaukee, like the

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Henry W. Maier to Walter K. Scott, September 22, 1961, box 78, folder 25, Maier Records.
[64] Donald A. Schwartz to Kenneth E. Fry, August 14, 1964; and Willett S. Main to Henry Maier, February 18, 1965, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.

Steuben Society, the Schwaben Sick Benefit Society, and the German Language and School Society to the committee.[65] Moreover, the committee remained in contact with the Milwaukee German Societies Presidents' Forum in discussions over the choice of a city. It was perhaps no surprise, then, that the committee returned a recommendation that Munich become Milwaukee's sister city in February 1965.[66]

In his report to the mayor on the committee's recommendation of Munich, committee chair Willet S. Main noted the historical significance and contemporary opportunities that a sister city relationship with Munich would have for Milwaukee. "Milwaukee's very prominent population of German background would provide considerable interest in an affiliation with a German city," Main noted, adding, "The physical, social, cultural, commercial, and industrial makeup of the city of Munich, compares favorably with that of Milwaukee."[67] Acknowledging that the relationship would involve some level of investment for it to be beneficial to Milwaukee, Main reported, "It was felt that there existed sufficient financial resources in the Milwaukee area which could be made available to promote the variety of exchanges which must take place if the Sister City program is to be a successful one."

As the committee's recommendation received attention from the local press, it was once again Oktoberfest that was offered as the most obvious piece of cultural exchange that would benefit Milwaukee, in addition to "teachers, students, trade apprentices, theater ensembles, musical groups and artists and their exhibits."[68] In an interview with the *Sentinel*, Munich City Director Andreas Kohl "suggested that a beginning, realistic encounter might be arranged for

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[65] Donald A. Schwartz to Kenneth E. Fry, August 14, 1964, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[66] Willett S. Main to Henry Maier, February 18, 1965, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Pilarski, "Munich Awaits Sister City Bid of Milwaukee," pp. 1, 7.

Oktoberfest," indicating that "Munich would share its enviable know-how on sponsoring a successful Oktoberfest."[69] Kohl told the *Sentinel*, "I know Milwaukee is famous for beer. … At this festival we manage, with the help of some two million visitors, to consume more than three million liters (about 790,000 gallons) of this brew."[70]

To Maier and other invested interests, Milwaukee's sister city relationship with Munich was all but locked down. The proposal was only in need of the Milwaukee Common Council's seal of approval, and anything less from the governing body of such a German city like Milwaukee had not even crossed their minds. However, when the proposal was brought to the Common Council in March 1965, it was met with vocal protest from Jewish and Polish community groups who opposed any affiliation between Milwaukee and a city so associated with the Nazis as Munich. Moreover, Maier received letters from residents reprimanding the mayor for the move, some very shortly after the Munich recommendation was announced in February. One such resident, a Mrs. S. Rindner, asked the mayor, "How callous can you get?," as she added her name to "the many people who don't want to see *our* city's fine name coupled with the bloody and infamous city of Munich."[71] Referring to Munich's Nazi history, Rindner asked, "What can we possibly learn from that cursed city? How to burn babies alive? How to starve people to death? How to commit inspeakable [sic] crimes of violence against *many* neighboring nations?"[72] Expressing her opposition to Milwaukee establishing a relationship with Munich, or any German city, Rindner both questioned the purpose of what she called the sister city "gimmick" and suggested that such a relationship should instead symbolize civility. However,

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[69] Ibid.
[70] Andreas Kohl, quoted in Pilarski, "Munich Awaits Sister City Bid of Milwaukee."
[71] S. Rindner to Henry Maier, February 18, 1965, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[72] Ibid.

her opposition did not challenge the city's historic and established cultural Germanness, but rather implied that Milwaukee should have nothing to do with Germany's recent past—that Milwaukee's good Germans were not the Nazis of Munich. "If you must (and why must you?) choose a European city, how about one in *Denmark*?," Rindner suggested. "This was the only country in Europe that showed a little decency in the war time. They deserve credit—not a city in Germany."[73]

With such strong and unexpected opposition, Maier quickly halted the process, and he and the Sister City Committee eventually decided to pull the plug on the project altogether. However, in the process, Maier developed an official narrative of the incident and an administration policy that shaped sister city discussions for the remainder of his administration. "My own role in this matter has been greatly misunderstood," Maier wrote to Willet Main, trying to lessen his profile in the matter. "I created your committee at the urging of a State Department official involved in the sister city program."[74] Reframing his Munich efforts as part of a Cold War initiative, Maier explained, "This official indicated that perhaps Milwaukee was shirking its national and international responsibilities in the area of cultural exchange and strengthening of the western alliance against Communism."[75] Perhaps intending to discredit local opposition to his Munich plan as the work of leftist radicals, Maier concluded, "And, of course, the Communists are very much against the sister city program."[76]

Although opposition to Maier's sister city plan had been only directed at the pairing of Milwaukee with Munich or another German city, Maier turned it into an indictment of

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Henry W. Maier to Willett S. Main, March 19, 1965, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

establishing a sister city relationship altogether. "I emphatically agree with you that there has been much confusion and misunderstanding about this whole matter," Maier told Main, "so much so that I think your committee should consider a more basic question: Should Milwaukee have a sister city at all?"[77] Maier thus framed the opposition to Munich as indicative of discord unique and inherent to Milwaukee's multiethnic environment, and ultimately distracting to the city's business as usual, rather than the aversion to the connection of the city to the capitol of Nazism that it was. "This is not the type of project which should cause disharmony in the community, particularly at a time when we are trying to create a cooperative atmosphere in which to attack our manifold problems of age and growth," Maier explained. "If it continues to produce disharmony, pitting neighbor against neighbor, then it simply isn't worthwhile."[78] This essentially amounted to a declaration that, if Munich or any other German city cannot be Milwaukee's sister city, then nothing will—or rather claiming the first crack at a sister city for German Milwaukee.

Maier remained dedicated to this policy with little exception for the remainder of his time as mayor. In the 1970s and 1980s, Maier received many requests to establish sister city relationships with various countries in Central America. Most of these efforts were developed around growing networks of humanitarian aid between Wisconsin and Nicaragua since they had become "Partner States" in the Kennedy administration's 1961 Alliance for Progress program—much of which had been organized out of Milwaukee. In 1974, the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Committee launched an effort to more formally pair Wisconsin cities with Nicaraguan cities, with significant success establishing partnerships between Racine and Bluefields, Fort Atkinson

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

and Puerto Cabezas, and Fond du Lac and Waspam, among others.[79] Committee director, Hugh Highsmith, sent a request to Maier to establish a similar partnership between Milwaukee, Wisconsin's largest city, and Managua, Nicaragua's largest city.[80] "It would be an informal, no-cost project initiated with the encouragement of your office but conducted by a citizen group," Highsmith reported to Maier, noting that Milwaukee had already contributed a significant amount of aid to Nicaragua – especially after the 1972 earthquake.[81]

Maier's staff sent a rejection to Highsmith's proposal. "We believe we are duly represented and have, in fact, participated rather generously in the disaster relief program *when there was such a need* [emphasis theirs]," staff assistant Burt Mulroy wrote to Highsmith. "I am sure our citizens would respond in a similar generous manner should— and, hopefully, it won't—a need arise in the future."[82] However, Maier's staff also alluded to the Munich incident almost a decade before, but more abstractly so. "Over the past decade there have been many, many efforts on the part of our citizenry to 'adopt' one or other city in a foreign country," Mulroy claimed. "In each instance, the pressures have come from large representations of ethnic groups who are first and second generation immigrants from the countries (or the cities) involved. In each instance, our formal efforts to effect a 'sister-city' relationship have met with failure due to active opposition by those who harbored strong feelings against the city (or county) under consideration or who believed that *their* nationality group should receive prior consideration."[83] Instead of indicating that it was one particular battle over a sister city relationship with Munich in 1965 that precipitated the Mayor's no-sister policy, Mulroy suggests

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[79] Hugh Highsmith to Henry Maier, February 20, 1974, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Bert C. Mulroy to Hugh Highsmith, February 28, 1974, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[83] Ibid.

that this was more of regular occurrence—that multiple conflicts over sister city proposals between Milwaukee's ethnic groups had warranted a complete cessation of such efforts.

Moreover, Managua or any other Nicaraguan city did not fit the Maier administration's vision of what a sister city relationship should look like for Milwaukee. "To the best of my knowledge, there has been no special interest by the people of Milwaukee in naming Managua as our 'sister city,'" Mulroy noted. "By the same token, very few of our residents claim either Managua or Nicaragua itself as their home area." Since the proposed relationship with Managua did not reflect Milwaukee's historic white ethnicity, much less its Germanness, it therefore appears that it was out of the question for Maier.

Although Maier maintained his official no-sister policy, he briefly wavered in 1984 to participate in the Ground Zero Pairing Project. Established in 1982 and coordinated by a Portland-based non-profit organization, the Ground Zero Pairing Project worked to lessen the chances of nuclear war by establishing "people-to-people" relationships between American cities and cities in the Soviet Union, reducing hatred and misunderstanding between the two superpowers.[84] The Milwaukee Common Council passed a resolution to accept a pairing between Milwaukee and Yaroslav on June 12, 1984, which the mayor signed nine days later.[85] The resolution noted the importance of Milwaukee's participation in the program, stating, "Over 1,000 cities in the United States are currently participating in this Project, with another 500 in the process of doing so. … Milwaukee's participation in the Ground Zero Pairing Project would be advantageous for the city, the United States and the Ground Zero Pairing Project's efforts to help

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[84] Brian S. Akre, "'Pairing Project' Links Soviet and U.S. Cities," *Lawrence Journal-World*, November 25, 1983, p. 26.
[85] Milwaukee Common Council, "Resolution 83-2382: Resolution Supporting the Ground Zero Pairing Project" June 12, 1984, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.

build a bridge of understanding between two countries."[86] A later *Milwaukee Reader* article also noted significant similarities between Milwaukee and Yaroslav, including its large churches, major machine, chemical, and energy industries, as well as cheese, butter, meat-packing, and confection industries.[87] Yet, Maier's insistence that Milwaukee avoid formal sister city relationships did not waver in the wake of this brief divergence, as the mayor vetoed a 1987 Common Council Resolution to make Ticuantepe, Nicaragua a sister city.[88]

The search for a German sister city for Milwaukee was not abandoned, however, and efforts were revived once again in the mid-1970s—not by the mayor, but the German-American Societies of Milwaukee, a federation of local German ethnic organizations. The organization conducted a search for an appropriate German city to pair with Milwaukee by "asking area high school students to write essays on various German candidate cities."[89] The German American Societies chose Heidelberg out of these candidates, and independently declared it Milwaukee's sister city. The Milwaukee Jewish Federation responded in kind by declaring Haifa, Israel as Milwaukee's sister city.[90] These moves did not generate any reaction from the mayor's office, suggesting that he approved of Milwaukee's ethnic organizations taking the development of sister city programs into their own hands while the city officially remained neutral. "Milwaukee has over 70 nationality groups and over 100 ethnic organizations," administration officials responded in their company line to residents who wrote in to request the different sister city connections. "The development of a sister city relationship with any specific city could create the

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[86] Ibid.
[87] "Milwaukee's Sister Cities," *Milwaukee Reader*, May 6, 1985, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[88] Milwaukee Common Council, "Resolution 87-0376: Substitute Resolution Establishing a Sister City Relationship With a City in Nicaragua" June 22, 1987, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records; Henry W. Maier to Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, August 6, 1987, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[89] "Milwaukee's Sister Cities."
[90] Ibid.

appearance of favoritism and exclusivity. Consequently, such formal relationships would be counterproductive and not in the interest of community harmony."[91] A key departure from the celebrations of cultural diversity in the programming of progressive social centers of the 1930s, Maier outwardly articulated the official position of municipal government in the multicultural city as one of impartiality and disinvestment from cultural favoritism. To Maier, in the wake of the Munich incident, liberal equality meant severing city business from identity politics. However, the Maier administration collaborated with business leaders to maintain an informal favored relationship with Germany, making trips there for inspiration and bringing ideas and materials back with them to use in their redevelopment efforts. So, while offering visions of civic democracy with one hand, Milwaukee's growth interests ensured that it was an imaginary still framed in white ethnic German hegemony with the other.[92]

Designing an Old World Downtown

In 1964, a group of business leaders and city officials formed a committee to explore the feasibility of, and possible plan for, a cultural and amusement center in downtown Milwaukee. Headed by Boston Store chairman, Peter G. Scotese, and financed by the Downtown Association, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, and the Greater Milwaukee Committee, this group sought to create a more lively commercial entertainment space in tune with Disneyland in California or the Rockefeller Center in New York that would draw more

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[91] Jeff Musche to Mike Whitcomb, July 30, 1987, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records; Jeanne E. Gettelman to Anne Junkerman, August 28, 1987, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records; Jeanne E. Gettelman to Joseph T. Procak, Jr., October 14, 1987, box 166, folder 7, Maier Records.
[92] Melamed, *Represent and Destroy*.

tourists into downtown and thereby revitalize the city's economy.[93] By early 1965, however, the committee had formed a more coherent vision for their project: a European-style cultural district along the Milwaukee River, inspired by the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, Denmark—"a riverfront showcase of food, music, fountains, and gardens" that had been in operation since 1843.[94] As they evolved and eventually scaled back over the course of the next few years, Milwaukee's "Tivoli" plans, as they were often referred to, signaled an important shift in visions of the Milwaukee River's role in the city's economy—from a predominantly industrial space to one focused on entertainment and recreation—and the important role that history and old world heritage played in shaping that shift. This riverside cultural center renewal project, in other words, was among the first of many that expressly aspired to make a New Milwaukee rooted in the Old World.

In January 1965, the Milwaukee Tivoli committee brought Henning Soager, the managing director of Copenhagen's Tivoli, in to consult with the group on "the feasibility of developing a Tivoli-type center in Milwaukee."[95] Soager reported that the gardens had proved a significant destination for European tourists, drawing approximately 4.5 million people a year, and remained an important fixture of the city's economy, with annual returns of around $700,000 to $800,000, and about 2,300 employees.[96] However, as Soager explained, the gardens were a firmly established private enterprise, charging admission of about $.25 and operated by a corporation with 1,000 stockholders—"most of whom have a family tradition of owning the

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[93] "Study Set on Center," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 3, 1964, sec. 1, p. 6; Norman, "Congenial Milwaukee," 186.
[94] Norman, "Congenial Milwaukee," 186; "Theaters Impressive, Tivoli Director Says," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 19, 1965, sec. 2, p. 10.
[95] "Theaters Impressive, Tivoli Director Says," 10.
[96] Ibid.

stock, so it is seldom offered for sale," Soager noted.[97] These numbers likely confirmed to the committee that their vision of a Milwaukee Tivoli was on track for boosting downtown tourism. As Scotese later declared, "the fact that there are 60.5 million persons within a 450-mile radius of Milwaukee indicates that it would be possible for such a center here to outdraw the recent Seattle World Fair over a period of time."[98] Pursuit of such a model would have also advanced the GMC's work to dismantle the city's public infrastructure. By enclosing a significant portion of downtown as a private entertainment space managed by a corporation composed of the city's elite, adherence to the Tivoli model would have rolled back decades of work of the city's socialist administrations to secure and expand leisure space as part of the public trust.

In May 1965, the Tivoli committee sent a group of business leaders, city officials, designers, and consultants to Copenhagen to more directly study the Tivoli Gardens and other European attractions that Milwaukee might be able to adopt. Among these representatives were Scotese, Joseph W. Simpson, Jr., president of First Wisconsin National Bank, Willard Downing, professor of social work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the secretary of the Tivoli committee, and Gustav Mader, owner of Mader's German Restaurant on North Third Street.[99] Both the Milwaukee group and Tivoli officials suggested that there was something special about Milwaukee that indicated the likely success of such a project. "Soager told the group that many persons and groups came to Copenhagen with the idea of duplicating it," the *Sentinel* reported. "However, he said, he could not recall a delegation as large as that from Milwaukee. He said he felt the determination of the Milwaukee committee in its study was unusual." Scotese added that "he thought there wasn't 'a city in the country (United States) that

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[97] Ibid.
[98] "Tivoli Idea Cited as Tourism Aid," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 31, 1965, sec. 1, p. 13.
[99] Robert L. Dishon, "Milwaukeeans Fly to Europe on Idea Hunt," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 14, 1965, sec. 1, p. 5.

can develop a concept like this as well as Milwaukee can.'"[100] A significant part of this faith that a Tivoli-type destination would be successful in Milwaukee was the notion that there was an inherent connection between old world heritage and Milwaukee's historical identity. "For generations, Milwaukeeans have enjoyed food, music and pleasure spots such as parks, lakes and gardens," the *Sentinel* claimed, declaring that a Tivoli-inspired cultural entertainment center "would seem a natural for Milwaukee."[101] It was especially clear that, even in the earliest stages of planning, a nostalgic version of the city's German heritage was among the things that made the project seem most "natural" to the committee. During the group's trip to Copenhagen, the *Sentinel* reported, "There seemed to be general agreement that a center in Milwaukee should have as first priority an old fashioned German beer garden such as the city used to have."[102]

In 1966, the Tivoli committee released a design for the project that considered a massive section of the Milwaukee River downtown bounded to the east by North Water Street, as far west in its earliest versions as North 6th Street, Juneau Avenue to the north, and State Street to the south.[103] The design featured promenades that stretched along the banks of the river, park spaces with fountains, a carrousel, specialty shops, restaurants, and an exhibition hall.[104] Central to the plan was "an old German quarter on the west bank." The design planned to include several of the buildings and businesses on North Third Street, including Usinger's Sausage Company and Mader's Restaurant, "which have facades of old world flavor."[105] Other versions also included

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[100] Robert L. Dishon, "Milwaukeeans See Tivoli 'at Its Best,'" *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 15, 1965, sec. 1, p. 7.
[101] "Our Own Tivoli?," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 22, 1965, sec. 1, p. 10.
[102] Robert L. Dishon, "Tivoli Study Aids Plan for Center Here," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 17, 1965, sec. 1, pp. 1, 7.
[103] "Tourist Tower Funds Available, Developer Says," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, December 8, 1965, sec. 1, p. 10; "Tivoli Park Might Grace City's Site," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 19, 1966, sec. 2, p. 7.
[104] "Tivoli Park Might Grace City's Site," 7.
[105] Paul G. Hayes, "$4.5 Million Tivoli Center Practical, Consultants Say," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 19, 1966, sec. 1, p. 1; Robert L. Dishon, "4 Areas Studied for Garden, Favor River Site Tivoli," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 9, 1965, sec. 2, p. 8.

the old Gipfel and Meister breweries on Juneau Avenue between Fourth and Fifth Streets—"buildings that are part of old Milwaukee's architecture and history"—and hoped to create connections to the Pabst and Schlitz breweries—"the firms that have given Milwaukee its reputation as a center of brewing."[106] Moreover, the design planned for "eight new restaurants 'perhaps with a number of national cuisines,' and various other sidewalk cafes, tea rooms, coffee houses, beer gardens and snack bars."[107]

Although incorporating elements of the city's actual heritage—historic buildings like Usinger's, and cultural institutions like beer gardens—as the committee's design reveals, the Milwaukee Tivoli plan advanced a highly selective vision of that heritage, which they hoped to appropriate in order to restructure the city for the tourist economy. Much like MPM's Streets exhibit, planners aspired to make Milwaukee's Tivoli Gardens "seem" authentically Old World through both the manipulation of the historic built environment and the incorporation of pieces of European aesthetics that would best fit the imagination of the tourists they hoped to attract. By emphasizing sausage, music, and beer, in other words, the Tivoli plan promoted a very clean version of the city's German heritage that was more fun and aesthetically appealing to a broader range of American and global tourists. Excluded from this vision were traditions and institutions of labor and political radicalism, and other messier aspects of the Milwaukee's immigrant industrial past. As an urban renewal project, however, Tivoli promised to not only exclude Milwaukee's more unappealing history, but actually wipe that slate clean—destroying most of the physical remnants of the industrial city, and install the cleaner version of the city's heritage in sausage, music, beer, and *gemütlichkheit* in its place. Similarly, by designing the space as

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[106] Dishon, "4 Areas Studied for Garden, Favor River Site Tivoli," 8.
[107] Hayes, "$4.5 Million Tivoli Center Practical, Consultants Say," 1.

inherently "Old World," the Tivoli plan culturally negated any claims of the city's non-white ethnic populations to the space—especially the black near north side, adjacent to the planned development area.

Despite extremely positive projections of the success of a Milwaukee version of the Tivoli Gardens over its first decade of development, high estimated costs and plans for a new convention center complex, the Milwaukee Exposition, Convention Center and Arena (MECCA), had stalled its construction by the end of 1967.[108] "Mayor Maier has said that the city has many projects of higher priority to complete before jumping into the Tivoli development," the *Sentinel* reported. "Other city officials have raised legal questions as to what aid the city could provide. County officials have been no more enthusiastic about taking on the financial burden."[109] However, the plan's vision of a more "Old World" use of the river as a beautified recreational space lived on in the work of the Milwaukee River Technical Study Committee, a special commission of city planners and engineers appointed by Maier and the Common Council in 1963 to explore ways to "transform our dreary Milwaukee River from an almost dead artery of commerce into an esthetic attraction which will stimulate sound community development."[110] After five years of studying environmental conditions and consulting local businesses and civic organizations about their needs and visions for the river, the committee issued its final report in 1968, which outlined comprehensive plans to rehabilitate the polluted waterway and revitalize the areas around it for recreation purposes—including a system of public walkways and parks

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[108] Ibid., 1, 11.
[109] Ralph Dannheisser, "Tourist Program Still Only Plans," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 3, 1967, sec. 1, p. 5.
[110] Mayor Henry Maier quoted in Milwaukee River Technical Study Committee, "The Milwaukee River: An Inventory of Its Problems, an Appraisal of Its Potentials" (Milwaukee: Milwaukee River Technical Study Committee, 1968), 11.

that eventually became Milwaukee's Riverwalk.[111] Like Tivoli planners, the committee turned to the Old World as a source of inspiration for their visions. "We know that certain European river cities (Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Venice) have realized the rewards of careful riverfront planning," the committee noted.[112] The committee hoped that Milwaukee might achieve similar success with such a model, making the river a central attraction in downtown Milwaukee with recreational boat traffic and a diverse array of riverside businesses, apartments, bars, restaurants, and entertainment centers. "Revitalization of riverfront land use and appearance could draw shoppers, sightseers, and workers to the area surrounding the river," the committee explained. "Changes in land use, creation of focal points, and places of interest could induce movement to the river."[113] Although these changes did not come to fruition until the 1980s and 1990s, the committee's proposal a recreational river in the European model remains the primary vision for the Milwaukee River and other city waterways to this day.

While reimagining the Milwaukee River through the lens of Europe, the city also worked with businesses along downtown's North Third Street to establish the area as a new commercial and entertainment district, rooted in Old World aesthetics. After plans for the Tivoli Garden had faded, the city reimagined the same northern portion of downtown as the "Brewery District"—a development area "generally bounded by MECCA on the south, the old Blatz Brewery on the east, Schlitz Brewery on the north, and Pabst Brewery and MATC [the Milwaukee Area Technical College] on the west."[114] In April 1974, officials from the Department of City

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[111] Lawrence C. Lohmann, "Report Envisions Beauty Downtown," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 27, 1968, sec. 1, p. 15; Tom Daykin, "Riverwalk System Could Lure Visitors," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 29, 1993.
[112] Milwaukee River Technical Study Committee, "The Milwaukee River: An Inventory of Its Problems, an Appraisal of Its Potentials," 20.
[113] Ibid., 14.
[114] William Wenzler and Associates, *Downtown 3rd Street: A Proposed Development Program, 1975* (Milwaukee: William Wenzler and Associates, 1974), 4.

Development approached the Third Street Merchants Association and urban planning consultants from William Wenzler and Associates to formulate a plan to redevelop the downtown portion of North Third Street into a catalyst for the larger Brewery District project.[115] "The Downtown Third Street area is a 'natural' to … create an exciting pedestrian atmosphere set in an economically viable district," the group of city officials, planners, and business leaders claimed in their 1974 report.[116] "It is, at present, home for a mix of activities that now have been recognized as the type of variety needed to make a City a viable, active, exciting place—specialty retail shops, small commercial shops, restaurants, bars, general offices, studio offices, light manufacturing, warehouses and apartments—all in a two-block area strategically located and served by excellent vehicular and mass transit facilities."[117] The group concluded that mobilizing public resources to help turn these assets into a cohesive entertainment and commercial destination would ultimately be "profitable, not only to the building owners and tenants, but the City as well," including "a greatly improved tax revenue–cost ratio, as well as the significant effect that the environment created has on the surrounding areas of the Downtown."[118] As the 1974 report makes clear, however, this would be an effort driven primarily by Third Street businesses—the most active of which being restauranteur, Gus Mader and the sausage manufacturer, Fred Usinger. "The owners and tenants of the area have begun the process of change, a change motivated by their interest and commitment and, hopefully, their enjoyment of the street," the report notes. The role of the city, on the other hand, was "to encourage this development and allow it to grow."[119]

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[115] Ibid., 2.
[116] Ibid., 4.
[117] Ibid., 1.
[118] Ibid., 4.
[119] Ibid., 1.

A key part of what made North Third Street a "natural" site for such revitalization, the group claimed, was that it "reflects the cultural and ethnic character of Milwaukee's past," which comprised much of the "attitude" it "managed to hang onto … through the days that many fled the city."[120] Restoring the street's historic buildings and bolstering its historically German aesthetics, they suggested, would help return it to its natural state. These narratives of the street's heritage and revival were widely repeated in the local mainstream media. "Their street started life looking like a typical street of shops in a German village," a WTMJ-TV report on the planned Third Street redevelopment noted. "As time passed, some of that feeling eroded with new exteriors and changing styles. Lately, the influence of Mader's, Usinger's, and Reimers'—along with some suggestions from the Department of City Development—have set the merchants to thinking of returning the street to its original style."[121] "Lower Third Street used to be plain Jane," WITI-TV similarly reported. "Hidden behind ugly neon signs and trappings is a natural beauty reminiscent of Milwaukee at the turn of the century. That look will soon return to this street, in a cooperative effort of private enterprise."[122] Like the Streets of Old Milwaukee, the restoration of Third Street's historic building facades in the work to establish a new downtown entertainment and commercial district thus represented a return to the vibrancy and simplicity of the "good old days" in turn-of-the-century Milwaukee.

Also like the Streets of Old Milwaukee, the public-private coalition imagined their historic revival of Third Street as rooted in Old-World heritage. Citing the "strong Germanic influence" of the street's architecture, designers from Wenzler and Associates expressed hope that "the restoring of the Old-World look would make the area more appealing to pedestrians and

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[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., Appendix.
[122] Ibid.

attract visitors from the Performing Arts Center and MECCA."[123] Yet, this was not strictly limited to historic preservation or restoration. Developers hoped to import elements from European cities, as well. At one early planning meeting, Gus Mader presented slides of street scenes from a recent research trip to Munich, which provided inspiration for the planning and design of plantings, storefronts, signs, benches, and other aesthetic elements.[124] Indeed, as Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden note, Mader's and Usinger's installed "ersatz" German storefronts that had no relationship to the history of their buildings, but rather contributed to the Old-World aesthetics they hoped to cultivate in the district.[125] By the early 1980s, the Third Street Merchants Association had changed its name in a rebranding effort to the "Old World Third Street, an association of merchants." The Milwaukee Common Council formally approved the renaming of the six-block portion between Wisconsin Avenue and McKinley Street "Old World Third Street" in 1984.[126]

The development of Old World Third Street in the 1970s and 1980s represented a significant white ethnic claim to highly contested downtown space. Third Street had long been a key center of Milwaukee nightlife, with popular vaudeville and movie theaters, and jazz clubs that hosted famous local and national acts. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, these places had transformed into pornographic movie theaters and popular rock clubs that unnerved city officials and business leaders hoping to promote Milwaukee as a wholesome family destination.[127] This transformation became particularly problematic for downtown growth

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[123] H. Carl Mueller, "Slice of Europe Eyed for 3rd St.," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 14, 1974.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," p. 408, note 40.
[126] Ibid., 397.
[127] Matthew J. Prigge, "Banned in Cream City!: When the Milwaukee Motion Picture Commission Censored Films," *Shepherd Express*, August 31, 2011, http://shepherdexpress.com/article-permalink-15937.html.

interests in late July 1967 when police responded to a fight that had broken out between two black women in front of a popular downtown nightclub, incidentally named The Scene, on North Second Street. Tensions quickly escalated between the police and the predominantly black crowd that allegedly hurled bottles at them, and the police pushed the crowd north along Third Street into the segregated black near north side. While the incident initially abated, agitation erupted into racial uprising the next night as stories about the previous night's events circulated and the police maintained a heavy presence in the community. North Third Street became a key epicenter of the unrest as agitated residents broke shop windows, set fires, spray painted walls, threw projectiles at passing cars, and engaged in skirmishes with the police. Mayor Maier quickly called for help from the Wisconsin National Guard who established a protective barrier between downtown and the near north side by the end of the night.[128]

Although it was considerably smaller and less fatal than other similar incidents of that summer—namely in Newark and Detroit—business interests, city officials, and residents seriously questioned the future of downtown in the wake of the 1967 "Milwaukee Riots." As Frank Aukofer explains, the racial unrest challenged prevailing images of Milwaukee as "the city of beer and good times, a clean city, a place to raise a family, the city of *gemütlichkeit*" that growth interests were carefully cultivating. "By the end of 1967, [Milwaukee] had another stereotype tacked on," Aukofer notes. "It was a place where people were afraid to walk the streets at night. … Outsiders, and even many people who lived there, believed that it was not safe, and that was what counted, that was what worried the businessmen and the other people who are paid to worry about the city's economy."[129] In this context, the efforts of Third Street

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[128] Aukofer, *City With A Chance*, 7–20; Jones, *The Selma of the North*, 144–48.
[129] Aukofer, *City With A Chance*, 31.

merchants and developers to restore the Old-World heritage of the district from its modern "neon signs and trappings" represented a concerted effort to reclaim white ethnic control over the space. Like the Streets of Old Milwaukee, Old World Third Street offered middle class consumers and visitors safety and comfort in nostalgic representations of the city's past while also providing the appealing, authentic downtown entertainment destination they desired. As prevailing narratives about the street's revival suggest, the application of real and imagined Old-World aesthetics to the late-twentieth century cityscape symbolically reset the downtown district to its "natural" white-ethnic form, shedding the recent stain of racial conflict.

The white ethnic claims of the Third Street renewal efforts were further bolstered as the district's symbolic separation from the predominantly black north side became more clearly inscribed in the city's landscape. Downtown had already been physically insulated from the near north side with the construction of the Park East Freeway by the time city officials and the Third Street Merchants had formulated their renewal plans in the early 1970s. Running from the North-South Freeway to the city's Lower East Side, between McKinley Street and Juneau Avenue, the elevated freeway resembled a stark concrete wall securing downtown growth investments from the increasingly poor and recently riot-torn black community nearby. Moreover, the few streets that passed underneath acted as gates that restricted traffic between the two areas.[130] The separation was also imprinted in changes in street names that have lasted long after the Park East Freeway was demolished in 2002. In the early 1980s, a movement coalesced in the city's black communities and city hall to rename North Third Street Dr. Martin Luther King Drive after the slain national civil rights leader. As Third Street had been a key site of the 1967 uprising, the

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[130] Preservation Institute, "Park East Freeway, Milwaukee, Wisconsin," *Removing Freeways, Restoring Cities*, 2007, http://www.preservenet.com/freeways/FreewaysParkEast.html.

change would have been an important and symbolic move to help heal the still-tender tensions between the city and its black residents. Third Street merchants registered their disapproval, however, when they heard of the possible change. "Over the past decade, Mader's and its fellow merchants, have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars rebuilding 'Old World Third Street,'" Gus Mader wrote to Mayor Maier. "Old time building facades, cobblestoned walkways and gas lanterns attest to our efforts of restoration on Third Street. The merchants have spent tens of thousands of dollars and ten years promoting 'Old World Third Street.'"[131] Mader asserted that such a street name change would not only threaten these investments, but severely hinder his business' ability to draw visitors. "We estimate that we serve at least 100,000 out of town customers per year. 'Third Street' is easy to find, since it's between second and fourth."[132] Moreover, Mader suggested that, although certainly an important honor to Dr. King, the name would not fit the Old-World aesthetic that he and his colleagues had worked so hard to establish, contending, "Can you imagine changing our name to 'Old World Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive'?"[133] Maier and the Common Council complied, and, while most of North Third Street was renamed Dr. Martin Luther King Drive in 1984, the six-block section of the renewal area south of the Park East Freeway remained Old World Third Street.[134]

Through the development of physical representations of Old Milwaukee narratives in the Public Museum's Streets of Old Milwaukee exhibit, the establishment of new Cold War global

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[131] G. Victor Mader to Mayor Henry Maier, October 28, 1983, box 184, folder 14, Maier Records.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Mayor Henry Maier to Dr. Kenneth A. Bowen, December 5, 1984, box 184, folder 14, Maier Records; Mayor Henry Maier to Elinor D. Erichsen, December 5, 1984, box 184, folder 14, Maier Records; Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," 397, 401.

relationships that reflected visions of the city's Old World heritage, and the inscription of these in new downtown redevelopment projects like Old World Third Street, Milwaukee's growth interests constructed a powerful framework for securing control over the contested late-twentieth century city. Such "heritage renewal" projects offered residents a civic imaginary that provided comfort and safety in nostalgic memories while restructuring the rapidly deindustrializing city for the needs of a new tourist and entertainment economy. Like the Streets of Old Milwaukee, destination spaces that represented Old Milwaukee and Old World heritage were carefully selected and cobbled together from the discarded material of modernization and urban renewal initiatives. Moreover, as the development of Old World Third Street suggests, these endeavors also constructed claims to white ethnic hegemony downtown amid racial anxieties and open conflict. In physically separating Old World Third Street from the north side (Dr. Martin Luther King Drive), growth interests invited white-ethnic residents and visitors to live, work, and play in downtown areas, safe from racial danger. Open appeals to nostalgic memories of Old Milwaukee and notions of Old World heritage encouraged white ethnics to think of these downtown spaces, and even the entire city, as inherently "theirs." As these projects reshaped Milwaukee's spatial imaginary, growth interests and residents began to consider how such forms of heritage renewal might be applied to neighborhoods beyond the boundaries of downtown.

CHAPTER FOUR

Selling Old Neighborhoods

"Recently, I drove through a flattened part of Milwaukee known as the east side 'A' renewal project," local author Eve Benyas recounted in a January 1965 op-ed in the *Milwaukee Journal*. "I don't know the exact plans for this area's future," she noted, "but I do know something about its rich, colorful past because I was a part of it." While having long since left the neighborhood, Benyas had spent her childhood living on Knapp Street between Jackson and Jefferson Streets in the 1910s, and expressed shock at Milwaukee's "gigantic war on old buildings in exhausted neighborhoods," like her former Lower East Side home. "Memories engulfed me as I looked almost unbelievingly at what had been done by the marvelously efficient wrecking machines that reach out and annihilate building after doomed building," she continued. "The emptiness of the streets saddened me and I thought of our house, the neighborhood, some of the people who lived there, and the city as it was a half century ago."[1] Recalling her experiences roller-skating on the smooth sidewalk in front of Mayor David Rose's house, waving to elderly ladies who sat on rocking chairs on their front porches, pulling her little red wagon on trips with her father to the Haymarket, movies and Vaudeville shows at area theaters, and knitting khaki sweaters and bandages with neighbors for the Red Cross during the First World War, Benyas painted a nostalgic picture of a safe and worry-free life in a strong and friendly neighborhood community that stood in stark contrast to the void she described before her. Indeed, these scenes could have come right out of the Milwaukee Public Museum's "Streets of Old Milwaukee" exhibit, which incidentally celebrated its grand opening the evening her piece

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[1] Eve Benyas, "Memories of Old Milwaukee," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 15, 1965, sec. 1, p. 20.

hit the papers. And, like the museum's Streets of Old Milwaukee, Benyas' memories simultaneously mourned the loss of old neighborhood spaces under urban renewal's wrecking machines, and expressed a hope to salvage the essence of the communities that occupied them. "Now my old neighborhood probably will become an area of shining new buildings," Benyas lamented. "New families will live in them and perhaps, one day, another little girl will remember."[2]

Benyas's commentary reflected deep anxieties that many Milwaukeeans felt about changes several city neighborhoods experienced in the mid-to-late twentieth century in the wake of ongoing urban renewal projects, spreading "blight," and shifts in their demographic and economic compositions. These concerns were immediate for current neighborhood residents as such processes threatened to disrupt and displace their existing homes, work-places, and community support networks. Many former residents like Benyas who had left their neighborhoods to follow jobs or family, escape the dirt and noise of aging inner-city neighborhoods for better living conditions, or flee "intrusion" from new immigrants and non-whites, among other reasons, often maintained contact with old friends, beloved businesses and cultural institutions, and faith communities from their old neighborhoods—at times returning "home" for special occasions or brief visits for memory's sake. The deterioration or loss of these spaces represented a disconnection from urban roots, the familiarity of community ties, and, ultimately, their historic place in the city. Many Milwaukeeans inside and outside of old neighborhoods also saw these spaces and their community ties more broadly as the historic source of the city's cultural and economic vitality. The destruction of old neighborhoods

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[2] Ibid.

presented a real and present threat to the very "character" of the city, as well as a loss of potential secrets for its future success in a rapidly changing, deindustrializing national economy.

Ethnic identities played an important part in these anxieties, and the responses of Milwaukeeans to changes in their "old neighborhoods." While certainly organized around industrial workplaces, most of the city's nineteenth century neighborhoods also became vibrant ethnic enclaves, with parishes, businesses, taverns, and other vital institutions that represented and served the specific immigrant working-class communities that lived there. Such neighborhoods took on the ethnic identities of these immigrants and their descendants, which remained significant to how many Milwaukeeans understood, operated in, and related to these spaces into the mid-to-late twentieth century—often well after many members of these communities had moved out and new groups moved in. This is particularly evident in the map of the Lower East Side's ethnic landscape embedded in Benyas' nostalgic recollections. Benyas came from a Polish-Jewish family who operated a tailoring business out of their small, brown working-class cottage. Some of her family's "unforgettable" customers were Yankee-Yorkers who resided in the eastern part of the neighborhood, nearer to the lake. Her best friend, Julia Sullivan, was from a "gay and fun loving" Irish family who lived in an apartment down the street on the corner of Knapp and Van Buren Streets. However, Benyas recalled, "the great majority" of the neighborhood was comprised of German families—some "of great culture and wealth"—who "continued to live there, stubbornly resisting the encroaching new apartment buildings."[3] In this process of recalling the thriving ethnic communities of Milwaukee's Lower East Side from the 1910s, Benyas knowingly or unknowingly affixes the social formations of ethnic identity and heritage to the existing physical landscape of the neighborhood. In her memories, Germans,

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[3] Ibid.

Poles, Irish and other white ethnic residents were as much a physical part of the neighborhood as the structures and streets they occupied. To the current and former residents that shared these identities and memories, the deterioration and clearance of these places, therefore, did not just mean a loss of dilapidated structures, but also a loss of important personal heritage sites.

Concerns about the "character" of old neighborhoods in the path of blight and renewal also spoke to underlying racial anxieties about who the "new families" were that would come to live in the neighborhood's "shiny new buildings."[4] Memories of the ethnic heritage of Milwaukee's neighborhoods helped to delineate spatial imaginaries of racial belonging, and, ultimately, whose city it was. Although African-Americans historically lived in the city's Lower East Side since the mid-nineteenth century (albeit in a significantly smaller and less concentrated community than the "Bronzeville" neighborhood across the Milwaukee River), they were not included in Benyas' ethnic map of the neighborhood.[5] In telling such stories of multi-ethnic neighborhoods that elided the presence and contributions of non-white residents, businesses, and institutions, Benyas and others imagined old central-city neighborhoods like the Lower East Side as ethnically diverse, but ultimately and inherently white spaces. The disruption and destruction of the remnants of old European ethnic communities through blight and urban renewal, they worried, might precipitate an irreversible erosion of this white ethnic hegemony. Moreover, these anxieties often transcended neighborhood boundaries as concerned residents and their allies painted the destruction of old neighborhoods as a demise of "Old Milwaukee" and the white ethnic hegemony it represented throughout the city. One did not have to be "a part of" the

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[4] Ibid.
[5] Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, 21–23, 42.

historic ethnic communities of the Lower East Side to feel a familiarity with Benyas' memories and understand the implications of the changes she described.

Among the most important ways neighborhood residents and concerned allies responded to the challenges blight and renewal posed to their communities in the mid-to-late twentieth century was through the organization of, and participation in, neighborhood organizations. Such groups were certainly not new to Milwaukee as volunteer associations and clubs represented various political and economic interests of community members and businesses throughout the city's history. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, concerned community residents and business owners joined forces in new organizations to protect and preserve homes, businesses, cultural and religious institutions in their immediate area from proposed and ongoing physical and economic changes, and formulate and administer plans for neighborhood revitalization. This chapter will consider the work of two of these organizations: the Brady Street Merchants Association (BSMA) and Historic Walker's Point, Inc (HWP). Although facing different challenges in their distinct physical, social, and economic landscapes which required different responses, considered together these organizations were on the cutting edge of a new neighborhoods movement in dialogue with local and national historic preservation, cultural support, and community development initiatives. Area students and members of Milwaukee's counterculture were often instrumental in these organizations, instilling visions of social justice and community activism in much of the rhetoric and programs they developed. However, eager to be part of Milwaukee's restructuring, not victims of it, BSMA and HWP came to model much of their neighborhood-based plans and efforts on Milwaukee's larger civic revitalization efforts to shape the neighborhood's place in the city's socio-economic future. Ethnicity played a key role in such endeavors, just as it had in the efforts of city officials and business interests to create

new entertainment areas rooted in German ethnic heritage downtown. These neighborhood organizations employed similar narratives of heritage and nostalgia in preservation and revitalization projects that reimagined neighborhood spaces as important cultural and entertainment destinations, and appealing places for young Milwaukeeans to live, work, and play—thereby connecting neighborhood interests to the city's broader heritage renewal project.

As with downtown heritage renewal in this period, a key piece of BSMA and HWP's project was to define and delineate distinct neighborhood spaces. The areas these organizations represented were historically crisscrossed by complex and intertwining boundaries of parish, workplace, ethnic, and other community affiliations. However, the revitalization plans, promotional materials, and on-the-ground programs and initiatives they generated effectively institutionalized these spaces as "Brady Street" and "Walker's Point" with "natural" boundaries inscribed in the city's rivers, streets, and other geographic landmarks. Moreover, as BSMA and HWP told nostalgic stories of old neighborhoods rooted in Old World heritage in the course of these efforts, they also defined these neighborhoods as inherently white ethnic spaces—distilling the claims of civic heritage renewal projects to Milwaukee's white ethnic hegemony down to the neighborhood level. In doing so, these organizations produced a spatial imaginary that read the "natural" neighborhood boundaries they delineated simultaneously into the past and present as boundaries of racial belonging. This was particularly important in the wake of federal and local open housing legislation of 1968. While legal barriers to non-white "incursion" were steadily dismantled, the construction of such cultural borders helped secure white ethnic hegemony in old Milwaukee neighborhoods as new Black and Latinx families moved in. At times these organizations acknowledged and even welcomed the presence of non-white residents. HWP especially portrayed Latino residents as the natural inheritors of the old working-class

neighborhood and celebrated growing racial diversity as a community strength. Yet, prevailing narratives of white ethnic heritage still communicated that, although Black and Latino people were increasingly and actively part of old Milwaukee neighborhoods, these spaces did not really *belong* to them. Non-white residents were to be participants in or subjects of these community initiatives, not full partners.

Such neighborhood-level endeavors also effectively extended the city's growth politics into the community. Like their civic counterparts, BSMA and HWP countered the threats that urban renewal and blight posed to the stability and survival of their communities with preservation projects, revitalization plans, and cultural programming that reimagined the neighborhood as a consumer destination. Historic area buildings, restaurants, bars, shops, festivals, and other community institutions were vital pieces of these formulas, serving as draws for residents and visitors as the neighborhood competed with other neighborhoods in a growing city-wide commercial and entertainment marketplace. As the city developed a civic brand rooted in Germanness, BSMA and HWP similarly marked their neighborhoods as centers of white ethnic heritage—particularly for Germans, Poles, and Italians. By integrating ethnic businesses, institutions, and cultural programming into their preservation and revitalization plans, these organizations hoped to create "authentic" urban atmospheres that young, white ethnic consumers desired. Such endeavors effectively commodified community relationships, exploiting social identities and solidarities within and across neighborhood boundaries for economic gain. However, members of BSMA and HWP also expressed concerns about how these projects might contribute to the displacement of working-class residents, and damage the character of the neighborhoods they worked to preserve. To avoid such problems, these organizations offered home financing, employment services, and educational resources to their most vulnerable

residents. Yet, communicating expectations that, with some help, working-class residents would take care of their place in the community as their forebears had, such initiatives reinforced bootstraps narratives embedded in prevailing understandings of the neighborhood's white ethnic heritage. Moreover, these programs remained secondary to, and largely served, the organizations' larger development mission. While understanding that community relationships and solidarities were important, BSMA and HWP ultimately envisioned that the survival of their neighborhoods depended on the stability of their property values and vitality of their businesses.

Neighborhood Bootstraps

Urban neighborhoods were indeed highly contested spaces in the decades following the Second World War as various actors and agencies vied to secure and reshape cities throughout the United States. As Benjamin Looker reminds us, in addition to describing geographical subunits of cities—real and tangible urban spaces—the term "neighborhood" represents sociocultural formations, continually evolving in the vast array social relationships, experiences, and understandings that intersect and occupy urban districts over time. As such, these "imagined communities" are both reflections of, and are shaped by, diverse and competing visions of the city in American society—largely mediated through cultural texts. "Across the postwar decades," Looker argues, "activists, artists, writers, and everyday citizens would continue to harness the ideals of neighborhood and neighborliness as a way to understand, participate in, and oftentimes resist the startling social transformations overtaking the US city."[6] In the process, idealized notions of tight-knit and pluralistic urban neighborhoods, and contrasting narratives of

[6] Benjamin Looker, *A Nation of Neighborhoods: Imagining Cities, Communities, and Democracy in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 4.

neighborhood decline, became important symbols for competing visions of American national identity, social values, and democratic practices. They also served as "instruction manuals" for the expectations of modern American urban life. "Mixing artistic work with social advocacy," Looker claims, "cultural producers at once sketched out an idealized version of what 'neighborhood' ought to mean and challenged city dwellers to duplicate that ideal on the ground."[7]

These processes were particularly significant to shaping how American city dwellers understood and responded to the postwar "urban crisis" that unfolded in major Northern industrial cities, like Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Milwaukee. The confluence of deindustrialization, racial strife, white flight, and physical deterioration led many social scientists, white urban residents, municipal policy makers, and business leaders to fear their cities were heading down a slippery slope of decline. "Slums"—overcrowded areas of aging, poorly maintained structures that housed the city's poor and racially marginalized—had long been a fixture of central city districts. However, the structural decay, demographic shifts, population decline, rising crime rates, and overall loss of profitability associated with "blight" threatened to spread slum conditions to other, previously "healthy" districts throughout the city. "While the term 'slum' served to describe a current and somewhat static condition," Looker explains, "the act of identifying 'blight' in a district was as much a prediction of that area's future as a statement of social fact in the present."[8]

Responding to public health and safety concerns about slum growth—particularly amid the threat of Cold War nuclear attack—as well as the interests of private real estate developers,

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[7] Ibid., 31.
[8] Ibid., 75.

contractors, and suppliers of concrete and building materials, Milwaukee and many other American cities commenced vast clearance and redevelopment programs that sought to decentralize and modernize the city's old neighborhoods. What Benyas aptly described as a "gigantic war on old buildings in exhausted neighborhoods" was in fact a two-pronged attack. Proponents of urban renewal sought, first, to eliminate the sources of spreading blight as one might cut out a cancer, and second to restructure districts with new housing, more auto-friendly street layouts and freeway access, parking facilities, updated commercial spaces, and other planning solutions designed to secure or return these spaces to profitability.[9] As these initiatives disproportionately disrupted and displaced black communities that had been relegated to the oldest, most dilapidated parts of cities through the legal, economic, and social structures of segregation, critics like James Baldwin decried that urban renewal amounted to little more than "negro removal." However, as Benyas' commentary suggests, these projects also alienated white working-class residents who likewise found their communities in urban renewal's crosshairs, in addition to mounting legal pressures to integrate. "In their minds, physical renewal meant money for downtown business people who lived in the suburbs, and human renewal meant money for blacks," historian Jon C. Teaford explains. "In the journey to social and physical renaissance they were being left behind, paying the bills but getting little return other than unwelcome disruption of their lifestyles by advocates of busing and racial mixing."[10]

City residents responded to these challenges through the formation of community action groups. Although voluntary neighborhood associations had worked to shape the interventions of municipal and federal urban planning initiatives and resist black in-migration in northern urban

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[9] Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 82–121; Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, 7–10.
[10] Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance*, 169.

working-class communities in the decades prior to the Second World War, the organization of such groups gained greater interest and support among local white residents and business owners amid the incursions of postwar racial migrations and urban renewal.[11] Formed as "'civic associations,' 'protective associations,' 'improvement associations,' and 'homeowners' associations,'" Thomas Sugrue explains, neighborhood organizations "offered members a unified voice in city politics," "fiercely guarded the investments their members had made in their homes," and "paternalistically defended neighborhood, home, family, women, and children against the forces of social disorder that they saw arrayed against them in the city." "Above all," Sugrue asserts, "these groups represented the interests of those who perceived themselves as independent and rooted rather than dependent and transient."[12] Working to influence public policy in city hall and enforcing housing segregation on the ground, neighborhood organizations thus assumed roles of gatekeepers tasked with barring black entrance to their inherently "white" neighborhoods.[13]

Moreover, in Milwaukee and other northern cities, such neighborhood collectives also organized community resistance to urban renewal and presented "self-help" and community action as viable alternatives for dealing with urban problems.[14] As Amanda I. Seligman notes, such neighborhood organizations and block clubs in Chicago "allowed members to push their neighbors and the city government to live up to the formal and informal commitments that they

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[11] Ocean Howell, *Making the Mission: Planning and Ethnicity in San Francisco* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 7. Howell argues that, despite their different contexts and responses, prewar and postwar neighborhood-based initiatives comprised a long lineage of local interest groups attempting to shape what planning would look like in their communities.
[12] Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 211.
[13] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 163–81.
[14] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 211; Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism*, 56–58.

believed residence, property ownership, and governance entailed. …Block club members stepped into the gap between the prerogatives of private owners and the duty of municipal government to protect the urban environment."[15] In Milwaukee, Joseph A. Rodriguez explains, new neighborhood "self-help" groups formed in the 1960s and 1970s that "challenged Maier and other city officials whose proposed planning solutions included razing houses to build freeways and widen boulevards," and "organized neighborhood block watches and public demonstrations calling for more police presence" to fight crime.[16]

As John T. McGreevy illustrates, Catholic parishes also served as significant community agencies amid postwar changes—particularly in northern cities with highly concentrated Catholic communities. While more liberal priests, nuns, and parishioners of the universal church were active in the Civil Rights movement and instrumental to fostering racial inclusivity in urban communities, other Catholics viewed community churches as fixed ethnic institutions and vigorously defended "parish boundaries" as racial boundaries.[17] Moreover, "as the largest private landowner in the northern cities" and a common link between Catholic city officials, contractors, unions, and residents, the Church proved to be a powerful agent in shaping urban renewal's local impact—from redirecting projects to non-Catholic areas, to securing a privileged place for the Parish and its members in new developments.[18]

However, significant shifts in urban policy and ideology offered voluntary neighborhood groups greater opportunities to have a say in how their communities would be reshaped,

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[15] Amanda I. Seligman, *Chicago's Block Clubs: How Neighbors Shape the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 21.
[16] Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism*, 56–58.
[17] John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 79–110.
[18] Ibid., 123–32.

preserved, and revitalized in the 1970s. As Jon C. Teaford explains, "A new rhetoric of revitalization lavished praise on old-fashioned neighborhoods, renovated townhouses, and the density and diversity of urban life"—gradually replacing the vast urban renewal schemes modeled on decentralization and middle-class, auto-centric, suburban ideals.[19] "Instead," Teaford notes, "the older hubs now sought to build on their own traditional strengths, emphasizing mass transit and rehabilitation of older structures rather than demolition and reconstruction."[20] This change of thinking was in part due to the work of local and national historic preservationists and community activists, like Jane Jacobs, who challenged urban policy makers and residents alike to reconsider the "problems" of density and small, aging, mixed-use structures as positive aspects of urban form, fostering safety, diversity, and strong community ties.[21] It was also due to urban renewal's financial and political limitations—particularly amid the emergence of neoliberal municipal austerity campaigns. Although cities received massive grants through new federal programs and municipal and state governments devoted considerable proportions of their budgets to restructuring projects, these funds did not cover the costs of "total renewal" that advocates urged. As Stephanie R. Ryberg argues, many buildings and neighborhoods were spared from destruction as planners decided how to implement large urban renewal schemes with limited resources.[22] These limits became particularly acute as New York, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and other cities experienced major fiscal crises and bankruptcy in the mid-1970s. Expenses and debt quickly mounted while deindustrialization, suburbanization, and urban renewal steadily

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[19] Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance*, 8.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Reissue edition (New York: Vintage, 1992).
[22] Stephanie R. Ryberg, "Historic Preservation's Urban Renewal Roots: Preservation and Planning in Midcentury Philadelphia," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 2 (March 2013): 193–94.

eroded municipal finances.[23] Moreover, federal funding for urban renewal expired as President Richard Nixon went to work dismantling the Johnson administration's Great Society programs.[24] "Retrenchment was imperative," Teaford explains, "and one city after another reduced its labor force and its investment in capital improvements."[25] Emerging austerity and entrepreneurialist regimes sought to divest municipal governments of large public projects and social welfare initiatives. In their wake, neighborhood organizations picked up some of the responsibilities and endeavors of urban liberalism that they felt were necessary to the survival and prosperity of their communities.[26]

Meanwhile, some old central-city neighborhoods gained new interest in the late 1960s and 1970s from young, middle- and upper-class, white-collar workers and students who increasingly chose to live in the city over following the suburban American dream. As Suleiman Osman explains, this "new middle class" sought aging homes in Victorian working-class districts, like Brooklyn's brownstones, "as part of a search for the authenticity they felt was lacking in the new university campuses, government complexes, and corporate skyscrapers they worked and studied in."[27] These "brownstoners" spearheaded a turn to more localist visions of urban revitalization, rooted in both progressive and conservative politics, that rejected large, government-sponsored, modernist planning and reform initiatives in favor of smaller, private, commercial and residential, preservation and neotraditional development projects.[28] However, as

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[23] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 44–45; Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance*, 226–31.
[24] Christopher Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 176–77; Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 45.
[25] Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance*, 9.
[26] Christopher Mele, *Selling the Lower East Side: Culture, Real Estate, and Resistance in New York City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 10.
[27] Suleiman Osman, *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13.
[28] Ibid., 14–15; Mele, *Selling the Lower East Side*, 10.

Neil Smith explains, these changes ultimately meant a "gentrification" of old working-class neighborhoods that largely aligned with urban power brokers' larger economic restructuring goals. Capital moved back into the city as white-collar home-buyers, aspiring preservationists, and developers took advantage of favorable returns that the rehabilitation of inner-city properties promised for their investment. "Viewed in this way," Smith argues, "gentrification is not a chance occurrence or an inexplicable reversal of some inevitable filtering process [of land values and capital away from the city center]. On the contrary, it is to be expected." Real estate developers, banks, and other urban power brokers treated old neighborhoods as new "frontiers" for capital accumulation, and rewarded landlords, homeowners, and commercial property owners who deliberately let buildings and property deteriorate based on the promise of their future desirability.[29] In the process, "authentic" working-class urban communities that gentrifiers desired were uprooted or transformed as neighborhood development interests worked to offer more dining, entertainment, and other modern amenities of an American middle- and upper-class consumer lifestyle in competition with other parts of the city for their business.[30]

Throughout these transformations, converging discourses of neighborhood protection and revitalization consistently maintained and reinforced an uneven racial binary that privileged the historic place of white ethnicity over existing non-white communities in the urban American spatial imaginary. Once considered "ghettos" themselves, old European immigrant enclaves turned white-ethnic urban villages were idealized as healthy, harmonious, and desirable spaces against the "smoldering streetscapes, patrolling national guardsmen, urban deprivation and decay" of the contemporary racial ghetto.[31] As Looker explains, "Such accounts typically relied

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[29] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 67–74, quote 69.
[30] Mele, *Selling the Lower East Side*, 3.
[31] Looker, *A Nation of Neighborhoods*, 137.

on a bootstrap narrative that took white-ethnic communities as the sole authors of their own social advancement, while ignoring the panoply of racially exclusionary New Deal and Fair Deal government programs—social insurance, public works, union protections, the GI Bill, federal mortgage insurance, and others, which had operated as an economic escalator for European immigrants and their descendants."[32] Whereas white ethnics were commonly believed to have historically helped themselves, social scientists, policy makers, and white residents increasingly perceived the inability of blacks to similarly improve their conditions as a cultural deficiency. In their influential work *Beyond the Melting Pot*, for instance, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan claimed that black urban communities lacked the distinct "foreign culture" and "clannishness" that provided a strong economic base for old ethnic communities before them. By contrast, Glazer and Moynihan argue, "The Negro family was not strong enough to create those extended clans that elsewhere were most helpful for businessmen and professionals," thereby hindering the ability for blacks to enjoy the same kind of socio-economic mobility—sentiments Moynihan famously echoed again in his 1965 report, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action.[33] White ethnic residents in Chicago's South Deering neighborhood expressed similar understandings in a community newsletter, Arnold Hirsch recounts, contending, "Nobody was 'poorer' than the European immigrants, … and yet their accomplishments were achieved without government aid; they 'just worked like hell and saved for a rain[y] day.' Let the blacks … do the same."[34] Such cultural comparisons effectively made white ethnicity "the normative

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[32] Ibid., 145–46.
[33] Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970), 33; Looker, *A Nation of Neighborhoods*, 147, 151–53.
[34] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 186–87.

'neighborhood' story, and the African American urban experience something very different indeed."[35]

New interests in preserving and revitalizing old neighborhoods coincided with the growing desires of white ethnic Americans to "rediscover, proclaim, or invent their immigrant roots" in genealogy, foodways, and other cultural traditions.[36] As white residents increasingly reconsidered aging ethnic neighborhoods ancestral homelands, ethnic revival became a powerful channel for race- and class-based claims to urban space. Urban power brokers depicted poor non-white districts as new "frontiers" for pioneering gentrifiers to claim from the "savages" that currently lived there. The ethnic revival of the 1960s and 1970s similarly fostered visions of old white immigrant neighborhoods as "turf" to be protected or reclaimed from deleterious outside influences.[37] Joseph Rodriguez argues that such notions of ethnic heritage and their accompanying "bootstraps narratives" bolstered mythologies of a prevailing white ethnic conservatism in Milwaukee that both resisted major urban redevelopment initiatives and desegregation, and offered self-help solutions instead.[38] Much like civic tourist and entertainment initiatives, however, ethnic revival also offered community development interests with new avenues to "brand" their neighborhoods as distinctive and authentic spaces that appealed to young middle- and upper-class consumers. Therefore, as new visions of white ethnic roots maintained and reinforced existing systems of racial belonging in the city, experiences of ethnicity in old neighborhoods became rooted more in abstract aesthetics and the consumption of

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[35] Looker, *A Nation of Neighborhoods*, 145–46.
[36] Ibid., 259–62.
[37] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 23–24; Looker, *A Nation of Neighborhoods*, 259–62; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 194–95.
[38] Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism*, xiv–xv, 31-65.

objects, food, and drink—often at the expense of traditional community relationships increasingly displaced by rising costs of living in gentrifying districts.[39]

"But All Was Not Cool"

The vast demolition projects Benyas described in her 1965 *Journal* piece comprised only a small portion of Milwaukee's East Side and the city's overall plan to renew the area. Benyas' childhood home had been cleared as part of the plan's "Project A," which spanned an area just north of downtown between Ogden and Kilbourn Avenues from the north to south, and between Van Buren Street and the Milwaukee River from east to west. Along with "Project B" just to its north, this made up the largest and most intensive clearance area of the city's "East Side General Neighborhood Renewal Plan," developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[40] Other sections were designated Projects C through H, which were scheduled to commence in stages over the course of the 10-year program, based on their conditions and how urgently they needed attention.[41] Planners argued that the overcrowding of small, converted, and poorly maintained dwellings on narrow lots, as well as a general lack of adequate parks and recreational facilities had made living on the East Side generally incongruous with modern standards of living and even dangerous. Moreover, the wide dispersal of commercial buildings, often located in mixed-use structures, they claimed, "hindered the development of major commercial concentrations" in the mode of American postwar consumerism, and the area's nineteenth century street layout was

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[39] Mele, *Selling the Lower East Side*, 3; Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 101–2.
[40] Map no. 3 in Candeub, Fleissig & Associates, *General Neighborhood Renewal Plan: East Side Neighborhood Renewal Area* (Newark, NJ: Candeub, Fleissig & Associates, 1961).
[41] Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, *East Side Area: General Neighborhood Renewal Plan* (Milwaukee: The Authority, 1959), 2a.

not suitable for modern increases in automobile use, creating disruptive traffic congestion, noise, and safety hazards to drivers and pedestrians.[42] The city's overall plan was to gradually work their way through the East Side, clear outmoded and dilapidated infrastructure, and redevelop the area with lower-density residential units, modern commercial facilities, improved street layouts and new freeways for automobile use, off-street parking, and green space.[43] Project areas A and B and other Lower East Side areas close to downtown, planners asserted, "contain[ed] some of the poorest housing conditions found in the City of Milwaukee," requiring immediate and comprehensive renewal attention. Project areas G and H, however, contained sections like North Prospect Avenue, "lined with some of the finest apartment structures in the City of Milwaukee," for which they recommended an easier, more selective approach.[44]

Brady Street, one of the Lower East Side's main streets located in the Project C area, was one of the key focal points of the city's plan. Like much of the Lower East Side, Brady Street and its surrounding area was historically home to a smattering of German, Irish, and Polish working class families. Although Italians did not move to the area in large numbers until the decades following the First World War—largely in search of better living conditions from the city's Third Ward—Brady Street became best known for its prominent Italian-American community.[45] Located close to the large industrial tanneries, coal and lumber yards, and ice houses that lined the Milwaukee River on the western end of the street, Brady Street became a thriving working-class immigrant neighborhood, lined with shops, saloons, and restaurants that

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[42] Candeub and Fleissig, *Area Plan Report: East Side Urban Renewal Area, Project Wis R-1* (Newark, NJ: Candeub & Fleissig, 1958), 5–6.
[43] Ibid., 26–33.
[44] Ibid., 26–28.
[45] Anthony M. Zignego, *Milwaukee's Italian Heritage: Mediterranean Roots in Midwestern Soil* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009), 63.

served the ethnic communities that lived there.[46] Area Polish, Irish, and Italian Catholics also organized St. Hedwig's, Holy Rosary, and St. Rita's parishes respectively, which became important centers of white ethnic community life in the neighborhood. Moreover, Brady was uniquely situated along the East Side's incongruous yet stark class lines as the lavish "Gold Coast" mansions of Milwaukee's industrialists on the east and south of the street butt against the simple cottages of their workers on the north and west of the street. Over time, "The street plodded on," one commentator later noted, "never quite poor or depressed enough to become a slum, but only one step from it. The original stores grew slowly, if at all. No business acquired the capital to dominate the street, and no developers were interested in investing in the area."[47]

However, the city's East Side Renewal Plan threatened to disrupt and displace these communities. Whereas other main thoroughfares, like Ogden and Farwell Avenues, were to be cleared for the new Park East Freeway and updated housing, city planners proposed the redevelopment of Brady Street into a modern shopping center. With updated commercial structures, ample parking facilities, and surrounded by new luxury apartments, planners argued, "The new center will provide a focal point for the entire East Side community—one of the significant deficiencies in the area at present."[48] Planners recognized that their extensive plans for redeveloping the East Side would impact the livelihoods of a tremendous amount of people. They estimated that over 5,700 households would be displaced over the course of their ten-year project, of which, they calculated, 5,631 were "white," and 135 were "non-white."[49] In Project

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[46] Peter Spielmann, "A Bit of Neighborhood Past: Just West of the River," *Bugle-American*, November 19, 1975, 11.
[47] Peter Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," *Bugle American* 6, no. 38, special issue, "A History of the Counterculture in Milwaukee, 1960–1975" (November 5, 1975): 74.
[48] Candeub and Fleissig, *Area Plan Report*, 34; Candeub, Fleissig & Associates, *General Neighborhood Renewal Plan*, 14, 34.
[49] Candeub and Fleissig, *Area Plan Report*, 44.

Area C, which comprised much of Brady Street, planners projected that 940 families would be displaced—not including individual householders and roomers.[50] The city promised to assist those displaced by these projects with temporary or permanent relocation in public housing, private apartments, or homes elsewhere, allocating a relocation budget for each project area through a combination of local, state, and federal resources.[51] Planners also vowed that "the residential character of the East Side Area would be retained and strengthened" through the project, but offered no sense of how they hoped to do so.[52]

Scheduled to begin in 1961, delays in Urban Renewal Administration approval and growing concerns about the project's feasibility postponed clearance work in the highest-priority East Side A area for several months—not producing the "clean slate" Benyas described there until 1965. By 1963, several city officials suggested that a more limited version of the city's plans for the predominantly white East Side might allow for more immediate attention in other severely blighted areas slated for renewal—namely in the Third Ward, on the east side just south of downtown, and the "Kilbourntown-3" area, a predominantly black area adjacent to the northwest edges of downtown.[53] As Maier called for a reassessment of the city's urban renewal strategies in 1964, it became clear that the city's plans for a comprehensive renewal of the Brady Street area had expired, and any further renewal would be done on an individual, building-by-building basis, in concert with real estate interests and developers.

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[50] Candeub, Fleissig & Associates, *General Neighborhood Renewal Plan*, 42.
[51] Candeub and Fleissig, *Area Plan Report*, 45; Candeub, Fleissig & Associates, *General Neighborhood Renewal Plan*, 37–46.
[52] Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, *East Side Area*, 2a.
[53] William J. Manly, "Renewal Progress Here Stalls in Bickering, Dickering Mockery," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 3, 1963, sec. 1, 24; "Renewal Plan Pushes Through Red Tape," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 5, 1966, sec. 1, p. 12.

Meanwhile, still very much a working-class white-ethnic community, Brady Street had, by the mid-1960s, also become a significant hub of Milwaukee's counterculture. Most recollections of this period nostalgically remember Brady Street as "Milwaukee's version of Haight-Ashbury," with its unusual stores, aromas of marijuana and incense, and "extremes of pleasure and protest."[54] However, in his history of Brady Street's "freak era" for a 1975 special issue of the local underground newspaper, the *Bugle-American*, on the recent history of Milwaukee's counterculture (which was certainly still ongoing), Peter Spielmann challenged these nostalgic visions (forming even in the five years after its so-called "peak") and provided a more complex sense of the anxieties and open conflicts of a neighborhood facing radical changes. In the 1940s and 1950s, Spielmann explained, cheap rent and the spacious, well-lit rooms increasingly drew young bohemians, beatniks, and students from the nearby Layton School of Art to the neighborhood. Several art studios popped up along Brady that displayed the work of these new local artists at a thirty percent commission, and area bars, like Frankie Tomasello's, catered especially to the beatnik community, offering space to display paintings, quiet corners for intellectual discussions, and live jazz.[55] However, "[Brady Street's] beat culture began to unravel" in the early 1960s, Spielmann noted, as studio costs began to rise and local artists left for more prominent scenes in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Moreover, real estate developers bought up many of the old Prospect Avenue mansions that housed Brady Street artists, and demolished them for large new condominiums and luxury apartments.[56]

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[54] Joy Krause, "60s Memories Linger, As Brady St. Begins To Stir," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 11, 1987, sec. D, p. 2; John Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999), 380–81.
[55] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 74.
[56] Ibid., 75.

Drawn like their predecessors by cheap rent, food, and proximity to Layton, UWM, and other area schools, Brady Street transitioned from "beat" to "freak" in 1966 as "young white hippies moved to Brady Street from their homes usually in other parts of town."[57] Often experiencing employment discrimination for their long hair, many of these hippies were forced "to create their own [jobs] or do without." This prompted a wave of "hip capitalism," Spielmann noted, as Brady Street boomed with art galleries, head shops, food co-ops, the *Kaleidoscope* underground newspaper, stores selling leather goods, records, jewelry, candles, clothing, glassware, soaps, and antiques, and other "freak businesses" by 1969.[58] "It was during those years that Brady became the 'street scene' for the hip community, with freaks, teeny-boppers, suburban straights, *Kaleidoscope* [an underground newspaper] hawkers, and cops all vying for a piece of cement on which to hang out," Spielmann explained. "If the area became identified as where 'the hippies hang out,' it was still misleading because a majority of the neighborhood was (and still is) working class families. But the freaks were new and highly visible."[59] Moreover, Brady also became a curious spectacle that increasingly drew middle-class sightseers and consumers from throughout the city to its unique shops.[60]

"But all was not cool," Spielmann noted. From the outset, the relatively new and more itinerant counterculture movement on Brady Street at times came into direct conflict with more conservative elements of the neighborhood's well-establish working-class ethnic communities, and its members were subject to harassment and violence from residents and police alike. Young Italian street gangs frequently assaulted beatniks and hippies they felt had moved in on their

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 76.

"turf." Police and city officials targeted the area's first headshop, the Indianhead, charging its owners and customers with petty violations, and area youth threw eggs, bottles, and even firebombs at the store while driving by. The Indianhead closed only a year after opening when a group of concerned area women calling themselves the "East Side Mothers" pressured the landlord to terminate the store's lease.[61] *Kaleidoscope*, the area's famous counterculture newspaper, had to move its Brady Street offices from the space they shared with another local headshop after it was badly damaged in another firebombing in 1967.[62] Violence erupted at Water Tower Park at the end of North Avenue over three nights in the summer of 1970 between police attempting to impose a controversial new curfew and the Milwaukee youth that regularly gathered there.[63] Although the park unrest was located a mile to the north, Brady Street became a symbolic target for angry working-class residents who "trashed" counterculture businesses and police who "arrested anyone found in a crowd of three or more persons."[64]

Concerns about safety extended beyond Brady Street's counterculture community as crime grew more frequent in the area, and residents increasingly felt they were losing their neighborhood to a hopeless cycle of decline. Brady Street's growing fame as a center of Milwaukee's hip community brought higher drug-use, vandalism, and street litter. "Adding to the crap level of a typical dirty old-urban street are the stoop-sitting freaks, roving greasers, and strolling families of Sunday tourists looking at the stoop-sitting freaks, roving greasers, and strolling families," Mike Zetteler noted in a 1970 issue of *Kaleidoscope*.[65] Zetteler suggested that

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[61] Ibid., 75.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Pinky Boyteen, "Beertown's Fountain of Youth: Water Tower Park, the Riots, and Beyond," *Bugle American* 6, no. 38, special issue, "A History of the Counterculture in Milwaukee, 1960–1975" (November 5, 1975): 66–71; Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 381.
[64] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76.
[65] Mike Zetteler, "Dirty Streets," *Kaleidoscope* 3, no. 4 (September 7, 1970): 3.

the glaring lack of municipal trash cans amid growing garbage problems indicated that the city was not interested in helping the neighborhood—beyond, of course, adding more police patrols—or even disinvesting in it altogether. "It seems that long ago there were trash cans on Brady Street, and people used them more and more as the street got busier," Zetterer claimed, relating the recollections of an elderly resident. "'They kept getting full all the time, and the city had to empty them,' explained the old man. 'Finally, they took 'em away one day and never brought 'em back.'"[66]

However, Brady's atmosphere grew more intimidating for many residents and visitors over time as reports of crime grew more severe. In 1973, the *Journal* reported that instances of burglaries, carjackings, and sexual assaults had increased considerably in the Brady Street area since the late 1960s—second in the city only to the near north side.[67] Moreover, drug-related violence also became more apparent, particularly after a "drug rip-off" on the corner of Brady and Farwell resulted in a shooting that left one person dead and another wounded in late 1970.[68] Such a rise in crime produced a crisis of belonging in the neighborhood as residents suggested that unruly white and black youth drawn to Brady's hip community from other parts of the city were affecting their lifestyles and forcing them out. "Usually people will say they are robbed by blacks," one elderly victim of a purse-snatching told the *Journal* in 1973. "But I honestly don't know what color this one was, he ran so fast. All I could tell the police was that he was a slender young man."[69] As a result, the *Journal* claimed, residents no longer felt safe leaving home at night, and the management firms of new Prospect Avenue luxury apartments installed new locks

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[66] Ibid.
[67] Gary C. Rummler and Michael Kirkhorn, "On Near East Side, Aged Stay Home Nights," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 26, 1973, sec. 1, p. 16.
[68] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76.
[69] Rummler and Kirkhorn, "On Near East Side, Aged Stay Home Nights," 1.

and security systems to guard against burglary.[70] The city responded to these concerns with increased police patrols, which typically resulted in more harassment of area youth. Fearing they were losing control, several Brady Street business owners left the neighborhood altogether, Spielmann noted, "moving their shops to 'safer' areas up on North Avenue, or even out to suburban shopping centers."[71]

Another group of business owners decided to address these problems more directly and secure their economic future on Brady Street, organizing the Brady-Farwell Merchants Association in late 1970—later revising its name and focus to the Brady Street Merchants Association (BSMA) in the autumn of 1972.[72] Representatives from both old ethnic businesses, like Joe Glorioso of Glorioso's Italian grocery and Joe Regano of Regano's Roman Coin tavern, and new "hip" ventures, like Mike Millen of Joynt Venture head shop and Bert Stitt, ad manager of *Kaleidoscope*, were extremely active in the organization's early formation. Together they crafted solutions to problems plaguing the quality of life on Brady Street, which they believed was key to strengthening its economic vitality. Among BSMA's first accomplishments, Spielmann recalled, was to lobby the city to "put in more trash cans and sweep the street regularly," in hopes of making Brady a more appealing place to live and visit.[73] BSMA similarly worked with the city on plans to widen sidewalks, plant trees, install "bubblers" (water fountains), and add off-street parking.[74] The association also pressured the city to deny business permits and liquor licenses to businesses they felt did not fit their vision or would bring

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[70] Ibid., 16.
[71] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76.
[72] "Brady Street Merchants Association" 1979 1972, box 1, scrapbook, Brady Street Merchants Association Records, Mss-1180, Milwaukee County Historical Society Archives (hereafter BSMA Records); Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76.
[73] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76.
[74] Ibid.

troublesome clientele. They were particularly concerned that the expansion of Brady's taverns might open the door for the street to become a night club strip, bringing more alcohol and drug related problems to the area. "One thing Brady Street doesn't need … is another bar," Bert Stitt, BSMA secretary and later executive director, told Spielmann.[75] This suggests important tensions in the organization's revitalization mission: While the expansion of Brady's entertainment spaces could foster *gemütlichkeit* and produce the economic growth they desired, night clubs would likely contribute to the seedy reputation they wished to shed. It was not necessarily that the addition of "another bar" would be a problem, it was that the wrong *kind* of bar might bring the wrong *kind* of people. As night clubs were often important cosmopolitan sites of popular culture, especially in the age of disco, such notions would likely have carried racial implications, as well.

However, BSMA did not imagine itself exclusively as a business association, but rather more of a *de facto* neighborhood organization. For instance, Father Frank Yaniak of St. Hedwig's parish was a prominent figurehead of BSMA, and served as one of its earliest presidents.[76] As such, the church played a special role in the organization, not only offering important community space for meetings, but also combining its roles as an important ethnic institution and agency for social justice to facilitate new connections between the neighborhood's old white-ethnic working-class and new hip residents. Moreover, BSMA supported significant channels for residents to get involved in neighborhood actions. In 1973, Craig Hansen, a graduate student in Urban Studies at UWM, contacted the neighborhood's Alderman Ed Griffin with suggestions about "the problems and opportunities" of the Lower East Side. Alderman Griffin and BSMA organized a meeting of Brady Street business owners, prominent residents, as

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[75] Ibid.
[76] "Dates Set for Brady St. Festivals," *Milwaukee Journal*, May 15, 1974, Accent, p. 14.

well as representatives of area service agencies, churches, and schools with Hansen to discuss some of his recommendations. Out of this meeting came the Brady Street Neighborhood Association—a broader coalition to take "constructive action for the improvement of living/working conditions in the area."[77] Although short-lived, the organization offered residents their own voice in addressing neighborhood problems and developing planning solutions. Among its most significant proposals was the development of a "Neighborhood Service Center." With funding help from the city and staffed by volunteers from the neighborhood and UWM, the association claimed, the center could provide Brady area residents with access to valuable political, employment, and health resources, as well as "a physical place for area residents and business people to discuss and develop input to planning and legislative bodies."[78] Yet, the organization expressed that, in order succeed, these efforts needed the support of the Brady Street merchants, suggesting that social concerns of neighborhood residents were understood as dependent on the economic interests of its businesses.[79]

BSMA also gradually developed a neighborhood marketing program, which, like the city's, effectively transformed Brady Street's complex and intersecting social formations into cultural commodities that served its economic rejuvenation mission. In 1974, BSMA started using a shortened form, "Bradystreet," in its promotional materials, thus transforming the place-name, "Brady Street," into a trademark. BSMA commissioned local artists to produce stylized and silhouetted renderings of prominent neighborhood buildings, which adorned the tops of association letterheads, logos, and marketing brochures. Brady's distinctive nineteenth century

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[77] "Introducing: 'The Brady Street Neighborhood Association'" 1973, box 1, scrapbook, BSMA Records.
[78] Brady Street Neighborhood Association, "Brady Street Neighborhood Service Center Proposal," July 31, 1973, box 1, scrapbook, BSMA Records; "Introducing: 'The Brady Street Neighborhood Association.'"
[79] "Introducing: 'The Brady Street Neighborhood Association.'"

skyline of irregular and steeply pitched roofs, punctuated by the familiar steeple of St. Hedwig's, thus symbolized the white-ethnic urban village BSMA hoped to secure and rejuvenate there. However, the smooth, simple lines of these stylizations also symbolically elided the decay of the aging, central-city neighborhood, and the socio-economic problems that continued to plague it underneath. Instead, such representations imagined a clean, uncomplicated, nostalgic version of "Bradystreet," suggesting that the modern appeal of its old, ethnic neighborhood aesthetics held the secret to its future success. The organization used similar imagery in a tongue-in-cheek billboard it posted on the eastern end of the street in 1976, saying, "You're Looking Up Brady Street"—simultaneously referring to the viewer's position on the street and the neighborhood's revitalization.[80] Moreover, BSMA produced an annual calendar that featured photographs, drawings, and other images of the people and places of Brady Street from local artists, along with advertisements and contact information for BSMA member businesses. The 1975 issue prominently featured common phrases in Italian, Polish, and Irish, and quotes from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and Shakespeare's *Anthony & Cleopatra*, representing the neighborhood's ethnic, counterculture, and artist communities. In the process, BSMA distilled white ethnic heritage, and also, significantly, the counterculture movement, into distinctive features of their imagined "Bradystreet" they could sell to prospective residents and visitors.[81]

BSMA's most significant development was the Brady Street Festival—a day-long community street fair that drew tens of thousands of people to the neighborhood every late spring and early fall through the 1970s. A group of community members and businesses organized the first official festival as a small street celebration in the early fall of 1970. Small

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[80] "You're Looking Up Brady Street" (Advertisement, n.d 1976), box 1, scrapbook, BSMA Records.
[81] "Brady Street Calendar," 1975, box 1, folder 3, BSMA Records.

block parties were a common feature of the neighborhood's counterculture scene through the late 1960s, and the 1970 festival attempted to organize these disparate celebrations into a larger, more coherent community street party. Although dampened by rain, over 1,000 people attended the first festival, which featured local bands, impromptu political demonstrations, and food and goods from Brady Street merchants. "[The] smell of barbecued chicken and dope. Wet hair in faces. Music and dancing. The streets belong[ed] to the people!," the *Kaleidoscope* exclaimed.[82] Recognizing the great potential that such a festival might a draw visitors to the neighborhood and encourage economic growth, the newly organized BSMA (then the Brady-Farwell Merchants Association) jumped on the opportunity to plan and sponsor another festival for the next spring. Instead of just another big street party, however, they reorganized the 1971 event as a biannual spring and fall community arts fair—a kind of neighborhood-based alternative to the city's Lakefront Arts Festival—where local artists and photographers could exhibit and sell their work at booths along the street.[83] The expanded festival also included street theater performances, showings of horror movies at St. Hedwig's school, and booths where neighborhood residents sold their rummage items.[84] Antiques and other trinkets had become such a popular part of the festival as "attics and storerooms from all over town [were] emptied to produce a truly amazing array of treasures and trivia" that it had to have its own section by 1973. The Brady Street Festival was expanded from its original five block area to include the whole street, and was split

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[82] Dennis Gall, "The Streets Belong to the People ... DO IT," *Kaleidoscope* 3, no. 6 (September 21, 1970): 3.
[83] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76; "Brady St. Picks Dates for Festivals," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 23, 1973, sec. 3, p. 12.
[84] John Carman, "Sun Shines Bright for Brady St. Bunch," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 7, 1971, sec. 2, p. 1; Michael Kirkhorn, "It Was a Joyful Day on Brady St.," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 5, 1972, sec. 2, p. 1; Krause, "60s Memories Linger, As Brady St. Begins To Stir," 2.

into two parts: an arts and crafts fair on the half of Brady Street east of Humboldt Avenue, and a flea market west of Humboldt.[85]

By both necessity and principle, the Brady Street Festival epitomized self-help neighborhood organizing from its outset. While BSMA worked with local aldermen to obtain the necessary city street permits, and the police barricaded Brady Street to traffic and intervened in some of the more flagrant transgressions of festivalgoers, the city otherwise left festival organizers and attendees to their own devices. BSMA volunteers took on marketing responsibilities, organized entertainment, managed vendors, set up tents, booths, and other facilities before the festival, and cleaned up afterward.[86] Organizers rented out booth spaces to artists and flea market vendors for a nominal fee—"$5 for one festival, or $8 for both"—which they advertised in local newspapers and festival brochures.[87] They also invited local artists to submit designs in a competition for the official festival poster. In addition to the notoriety of having designed the Brady Street Festival poster, winners chosen by the BSMA were awarded cash prizes.[88] The festival paid for itself through booth fees, a percentage of concession profits, and the sale of official festival t-shirts and posters. Any profits went back to the BSMA for future development plans.[89]

This self-help model generated a festival that largely represented the neighborhood's disparate and intersecting cultural communities. "Minimal screening results in a grand variety of the marvelous and mundane," the BSMA claimed in a festival brochure. "Scattered throughout

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[85] "Brady St. Picks Dates for Festivals," 12; "Join Us & Enjoy Brady Street Festivals 1976" (Brochure, 1976), box 1, folder 4, BSMA Records; Krause, "60s Memories Linger, As Brady St. Begins To Stir," 2.
[86] Kirkhorn, "It Was a Joyful Day on Brady St.," 4; "Brady Street Merchants Association Scrapbook."
[87] "Brady St. Picks Dates for Festivals," 12.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Olivia Cadaval, "Festivals and the Politics of Culture" (Washington, D.C: National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs, 1980), 12, box 1, folder 4, BSMA Records.

the length of the street are purveyors of food and beverages, musicians and entertainers, and community organizations dispensing their literature and probably selling something to raise funds."[90] Indeed, vendors from neighborhood ethnic businesses, like Glorioso's Italian market and Sciortino's bakery, church groups, and individuals sold Italian sausages, Polish Kielbasa, pączki, and other ethnic foods alongside the booths of Brady's hip businesses, artists, and individuals selling jewelry, candles, ceramics, paintings, and photographs. This "blend of the old and the new" was also evident in the various ways different religions contributed to the festival's atmosphere.[91] "Within the big street festival, there was sort of a religious mini-fest," the *Journal* reported after the 1972 festival. St. Hedwig's was the most prominent religious group, operating several booths that sold food and used clothing to raise funds for the parish. Other groups, like the Christian Scientists, Jesus People, and followers of Sant Ji Maharaj and Scientific Spiritualism, also ran booths handing out informational literature and proselytizing to passersby.[92] The variety of attractions also drew a diverse crowd. "This was undoubtedly a youth festival," the *Journal* noted in 1971, adding, "But the strolling crowds included a constant flow of older people as well."[93] After the 1972 event, the *Journal* observed, "The crowd at the festival represented a composite of the Milwaukee area. Among them were casually dressed suburbanites, street people common to Brady St., and Italian American families who live in the area."[94] Yet, this did not necessarily translate into racial diversity, as the festival remained predominantly white space.[95]

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[90] "Join Us & Enjoy Brady Street Festivals 1976."
[91] Kirkhorn, "It Was a Joyful Day on Brady St.," 1; Kathleen Matichek, "Bradystreet Curbs Problems," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 10, 1976, Accent, p. 1; "It's Festival Time for Brady Street," *Milwaukee Journal*, May 30, 1975, Accent, p. 1.
[92] Kirkhorn, "It Was a Joyful Day on Brady St.," 1, 4.
[93] Ibid., 1.
[94] Carman, "Sun Shines Bright for Brady St. Bunch," 1.
[95] Brady Street Festival Photos, 1973-1978, box 1, folder 7, BSMA Records.

BSMA emphasized the eclectic character of the festival in marketing material, presenting the neighborhood's mixture of ethnic and hip communities as a fascinating spectacle, important for everyone to experience. "Everywhere, of course, are the real attractions of the Bradystreet Festivals. People selling, buying, eating, strolling, and watching other people," BSMA claimed in a 1976 promotional brochure. Perhaps referring to the Summerfest smile logo, they continued, "People make Bradystreet a part of Milwaukee's summertime smile."[96] This suggests that BSMA imagined their festival as a smaller, neighborhood version of Milwaukee's festival-as-civic-development scheme, and ultimately under the city's larger *gemütlichkeit* umbrella. "The festival has been able to act as a kind of rudder, ballast and sail to the neighborhood development in the Brady Street area," festival director Bert Stitt told a group studying American urban festivals for the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs in 1979. "Its function has been to create a public image for the street, to boost sales and to act as a catalyst for neighborhood development."[97] So, much like Summerfest, the Brady Street Festival mobilized community identities and traditions to serve the neighborhood's private, commercial interests. By depicting them as "characters adding flavor to the neighborhood," BSMA and their allies imagined "Bradystreet people"—residents and festivalgoers—as attractions to draw visitors to the festival and Brady area businesses in and of themselves.

The *Milwaukee Journal* played an important role in forming Brady Street's public image, often aligning their reports with BSMA's larger growth mission. In the process, they downplayed the radical politics of the neighborhood's young, counterculture and student residents as merely a part of the neighborhood's eccentricity on display. The *Journal* often depicted overtly political

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[96] "Join Us & Enjoy Brady Street Festivals 1976."
[97] Cadaval, "Festivals and the Politics of Culture," 11.

demonstrations, like that of a group who marched through the festival announcing the acquittal of Angela Davis in 1972, as marginal to the larger, more moderate festival, only mildly accepted or amusing to other festival goers.[98] They also portrayed such displays as a nonthreatening part of the neighborhood's quirky character. "Past festivals have seen an 82-year-old World War I veteran wearing a tattered American Legion uniform marching with young people carrying the flags of the so-called Woodstock Nation," the *Journal* reported in 1975, also relating, "A bearded youth carrying a nightstick and wearing a Keystone Kop uniform once gave a ticket to a Milwaukee policeman who stopped his squad car in the middle of the street."[99] Without any context to the fraught history of police brutality in the neighborhood's countercultural community, this rather insurgent act instead became yet another humorous moment in Brady's overall weirdness. The *Journal* furthermore characterized the festival as an open and peaceful place where the city's usual class and political tensions dissolved into a common appreciation of art and the pursuit of fun. "On one block, the Boar's Head (also known as the Cathedral) singers …were singing lilting madrigals to an appreciative crowd, not all of them the sort of people you find at madrigal concerts," the Journal reported in 1972. "'Far out,' rasped a weekending factory worker as a guy in a fatigue cap with a six-pack hanging from his belt shouted 'bravissimo, bravissimo.'"[100] The *Journal* also frequently cited the neighborhood's white-ethnic working-class roots—most often mentioning the neighborhood's Italian residents and businesses represented at the festival, like the "Old Italian women [who] set up card tables and sold rummage items."[101] So, while downplaying radicalism, proponents of Brady's growth worked to

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[98] Kirkhorn, "It Was a Joyful Day on Brady St.," 4.
[99] "It's Festival Time for Brady Street," 1.
[100] Kirkhorn, "It Was a Joyful Day on Brady St.," 1.
[101] Carman, "Sun Shines Bright for Brady St. Bunch," 1; Krause, "60s Memories Linger, As Brady St. Begins To Stir."

forming a public image rooted in white-ethnicity—particularly portraying Brady as an inherently Italian neighborhood, an image that would certainly serve the many Italian businesses represented in the BSMA.

BSMA's festival initiative proved quite successful through the decade as the event drew around 60,000 people by 1975, and over 85,000 by 1978.[102] However, more people brought more problems—pushing the festival's self-help model to its limits. By 1976, complaints from area residents and business owners about noise, garbage, parking congestion, and public drunkenness threatened to end the festival. To gain more control and save the event, organizers raised vendor fees, eliminated the flea market, and worked more closely with the city to expand festival infrastructure and add more police and emergency responders.[103] "We're relying on the public to be good citizens in our neighborhood," Stitt told the *Journal*. Asking festivalgoers to not bring their dogs, drink too much, or urinate on neighborhood lawns, Stitt asserted, "These reminders should not curtail people's fun if they use their head."[104] These modifications kept the festival going for several more years. However, despite having dropped the Fall festival in 1979, residential complaints continued to mount, reaching a breaking point after the 1981 festival. "We're tired of it," one resident wrote in a letter to the editors of the Journal. "Tired of listening to drunks till three or four in the morning; tired of picking up litter after a crowd of 85,000 to 100,000; tired of inconsiderate people parking in our driveways, urinating on our lawns and swearing in front of our children; … and tired of the free-for-all image it gives the Brady St. neighborhood." She argued that the BSMA had "invited these thousands of 'guests' to the

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[102] "Join Us & Enjoy Brady Street Festivals 1976"; Cadaval, "Festivals and the Politics of Culture," 12; M.I. Blackwell, "Bradystreet Festival Might Be Doomed," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 19, 1982, sec. 2, p. 6.
[103] Damien Jaques, "Festival Bends to the System," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 13, 1976, sec. 2, p. 1.
[104] Matichek, "Bradystreet Curbs Problems," 1, 3.

neighborhood," but did not work with residents to provide adequate support for cleanup and damage afterwards.[105] In February 1982, 300 neighborhood residents successfully petitioned Alderwoman Sandra Hoeh to deny the renewal of the festival's permit, officially ending the Brady Street Festival after twelve years. "I don't think it benefits the lower East Side neighborhood to continue the festival," Hoeh told the *Journal*. Although some area business owners argued that the festival was "the one time of the year we get a chance to make some money" and "pay an awful lot of bills," Hoeh claimed, "The problem is …the people just don't stay on Brady St. but pour into the residential neighborhood."[106]

The festival's end in 1981 signaled significant shifts in the organizational lines and priorities of Brady Street's power brokers. In 1977, BSMA executive director Bert Stitt formed the Brady Street Development Corporation to work more closely with municipal agencies and private developers to organize a comprehensive revitalization program for the neighborhood. The next year, the corporation submitted a federal Community Development Act grant to "encourage establishment of ethnic and craft businesses in the Brady St. area, acquire and renovate one property, broaden the area's ethnic mix, and establish a neighborhood level of government."[107] However, many residents and business owners increasingly felt the BSMA and its development corporation offshoot were not adequately representing their interests. The "power bloc" that had promised to "fight disastrous urban renewal schemes or big commercial developments which could shatter the neighborhood," as well as blight and economic decline, now seemed to be steamrolling them. In a 1977 *Journal* op-ed, Marshall Bartos, owner of a stained glass studio and

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[105] Mary R. Schurrer, "Letter to the Editor: Fed Up With Festival," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 15, 1982, sec. 1, p. 14.
[106] Blackwell, "Bradystreet Festival Might Be Doomed," 1, 6.
[107] Deborah Fagan, "Any Hope for Brady St.?," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 12, 1978, Accent, p. 1.

self-described charter member of BSMA, complained that the organization increasingly ignored the wishes of the "majority" of Brady Street residents and merchants—particularly in their demands to end the Brady Street Festivals, which he argued, "benefit no one but a few restaurant and tavernkeepers and the promoter of the festivals [Bert Stitt]."[108] As a result, Bartos claimed, BSMA was rapidly losing membership and support from Brady area business owners and residents, like himself. [109] To Bartos, BSMA had become just as obtuse as the city, sharing in the failure to recognize and respond to the needs and concerns of the neighborhood while blindly pursuing a growth and development mission.

A group of similarly minded residents and business owners formed their own organization, the Historic Lower East Side Association (HLESA), in 1980. Among their first orders of business was to end the Brady Street Festival. "We feel the festival is counterproductive to the neighborhood," Robert Zizzo, Brady Street resident and chairman of the organization's Brady Street Committee, told the *Journal*. Suggesting a divergence between the interests of the neighborhood's entertainment and retail industries, Zizzo claimed, "The only people who really like it are the bar owners."[110] After unsuccessfully appealing to meet with festival organizers to confront these problems and discuss ways to "make the event more relaxed and orderly," Zizzo claimed, HLESA organized the successful neighborhood petition drive to block the festival's city permit.[111] Yet, 300 petitioners far from represented most of Brady Street's residents and businesses, and, although unsuccessful in saving the event, festival

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[108] Marshall J. Bartos, "In My Opinion: Brady St. 'Raffish' Image Is Not Helped Bye the Area's Twice Yearly Festivals," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 3, 1977, sec. 1, p. 15.
[109] Ibid.
[110] M.I. Blackwell, "Angry Residents Petition to End Bradystreet Event," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 14, 1982, Accent, pp. 1, 7.
[111] Ibid.

proponents also claimed to represent a majority. "The street festival can be a real nice thing for the community," BSMA president and owner of the Up and Under Pub, Tom Beckmann, told the *Journal*. "It can give it an identity. Many of the people around here enjoy the festival. … It allows the people to see the street is vibrant."[112]

The Brady Street Festival's successful development through the 1970s certainly demonstrated the power neighborhood organizations like the BSMA had in shaping their own growth politics and mobilizing community people and resources to pursue aggressive revitalization programs. However, the conflicts that ultimately ended the festival revealed important tensions between the interests of residents and businesses, bar owners and retail shopkeepers, and the greater growth and protection missions of these organizations—which also developed along lines between the BSMA and HLESA. Fluctuations between cohesion and conflict ran deep into Brady Street's complex identity politics—particularly as its dual roles as a center of the city's counterculture and an old, conservative ethnic neighborhood were translated into visions of growth. For ethnic business owners like Joe Regano, young hippies "brought the street alive"—injecting a cultural and economic vibrancy into what many felt was a declining neighborhood.[113] To many members of Brady's hip community, banding together with their white-ethnic neighbors afforded the counterculture greater legitimacy. Among its many benefits, Spielmann notes, this solidarity "reduce[ed] the overt aggression by the police against freaks and hip businesses."[114] Brady's counterculture waned significantly over time, but some had stayed on and become significant neighborhood power brokers by the end of the 1970s. Bert Stitt, for instance went from being ad manager at *Kaleidoscope* to a BSMA executive and director of the

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Krause, "60s Memories Linger, As Brady St. Begins To Stir," 2.
[114] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76.

Brady Street Festival, and ultimately left Brady Street in 1979 to start his own development firm in Madison.[115] While certainly facilitating the growth of hip businesses, BSMA's synthesis "ke[pt] Brady Street from being overrun by any one faction—hippie, nightclub, or whatever," Stitt explained in Spielmann's 1975 history.[116] Yet, Stitt offered a more critical view by the time he left, claiming, "I was very disturbed that a group like the counterculture could come into an area and claim it as their own. Their community was very exclusionary."[117] Eliding his own significant part, Stitt suggested that the street's youth culture represented an invasive species that all but displaced the strong ethnic community that lived there. To Stitt, the neighborhood's revitalization depended on new developments that emphasized its old ethnic roots.

Tensions between neighborhood growth and protection remained significant through the 1980s as anxieties about the change accompanied the optimism residents and business owners voiced about Brady's ongoing revitalization. Alongside a report on the gentrification of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the "Summer of Love," the *Journal* asked community members to reflect on their past experiences and future expectations for Milwaukee's own Haight-Ashbury. Jim Searles, owner of the Brady Street Pharmacy, noted, "The whole neighborhood is changing, and its part negative and part positive. A lot of repairs are taking place. But the poor and handicapped are getting squeezed out.'"[118] Yet, respondents also expressed doubts that Brady might become a "clone of Downer Ave."—a main commercial street on Milwaukee's more affluent Upper East Side that more actively pursued upscale redevelopments. "I don't want to see [Brady] ever becoming like fashionable

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[115] Deborah Fagan, "Brady St. Will Miss His Zeal," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 9, 1979, Accent, pp. 1, 3.
[116] Spielmann, "Evolution of Brady Street," 76.
[117] Fagan, "Brady St. Will Miss His Zeal," 3.
[118] Krause, "60s Memories Linger, As Brady St. Begins To Stir," 2.

Downer Ave," Ryan asserted. "The housing is totally different. The people on Brady don't have the income."[119] Another agreed that, while Brady worked to make restorations like Downer, "it's not getting more yuppie."[120] Ongoing revitalization efforts certainly brought perceptible changes to the neighborhood in the form of new boutiques, restaurants, and chain stores. To many residents and observers, however, the neighborhood's prevailing working-class incomes, mix of ethnic groups and old hippies, and old ethnic businesses and institutions signaled that Brady's familiar character remained steadfast.

Historic Walker's Point

While Brady Street residents and business owners worked to protect and revitalize their place in the city's Lower East Side, a group of wealthy East Siders spearheaded Milwaukee's historic preservation movement. In 1964, Eleanor Bell, Mary Ellen Wietczykowski, and other concerned residents formed a non-profit organization, Land Ethics, Inc., to coordinate efforts to save the Chicago North Western depot on the downtown lakefront at the eastern end of Wisconsin Avenue.[121] Milwaukee County purchased the aging depot and the right of way to the Chicago North Western tracks that wound down along the lakefront between North Avenue and Polk Street in June 1964 as part of their plans to clear the area for a Lake Freeway and expanded lakefront park space.[122] Nearby East Side residents, like Bell and Wietczykowski, argued that the Romanesque red brick building and its tall clock tower was an excellent example of iconic

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[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Cory Michael Grassell, "Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward: Historic Preservation and Revitalization, 1976-2006" (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2007), 19.
[122] Charlie House, "End of Line in Sight for Towering Depot," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 2, 1968, Accent, p. 5; "US Approves Union Depot," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 15, 1965, sec. 1, p. 1.

railroad architecture, and a familiar lakefront landmark that could be easily repurposed to meet the new needs of Milwaukee's transforming economy.[123] Through Land Ethics, they organized fundraisers, arranged guided walking tours, and lobbied city and county officials to raise awareness of the building's historical significance and coordinate its preservation.[124] Along the way, the organization and its allies recommended several possibilities for the building's future, including a tourist welcome center, reception hall, rehabilitation facility, ethnic community center, art studio cooperative, and "a small museum of 'Old Milwaukee' and a restaurant inspired by the theme [that] would create interest in the home-town folks and provide a starting point for a visitor to our growing city."[125] The depot continued to deteriorate, however, as county officials and preservation advocates debated its fate for nearly two years. "With a life expectancy which has faded to mere days, [the depot] stands as a vandalized, pigeon stained, disconsolate monument to the history of a city which does not care," the *Journal* reported somewhat histrionically. "Most of Milwaukee was bustling with more awesome problems than the restoration of an unloved, tired old building."[126] In January 1968, city building inspector Mathias F. Schimenz ordered the county to either restore or demolish the depot, and the building was demolished that April.[127]

Although their endeavor to save the Chicago North Western Depot ultimately failed, the experience proved extremely instructive to Land Ethics' preservation efforts in Milwaukee from

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[123] House, "End of Line in Sight for Towering Depot," 1, 5.
[124] Patricia Roberts, "Party Lights Up Memories of Depot's Past," *Milwaukee Journal*, October 24, 1966, sec. 2, p. 5.
[125] Mrs. Ray McGinnis to Henry W. Maier, March 31, 1966, box 184, folder 26, Maier Records; Roberts, "Party Lights Up Memories of Depot's Past," 5; House, "End of Line in Sight for Towering Depot," 1.
[126] House, "End of Line in Sight for Towering Depot," 1, 5.
[127] House, "End of Line in Sight for Towering Depot"; Jay Joslyn, "North Western Depot Was Gateway to Old Milwaukee, a Symbol of Past," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 17, 1988, sec. 3, p. 3; Grassell, "Historic Third Ward," 19.

that moment on. First, it helped develop an "on-the-ground" movement that could progressively advocate for and act on the preservation of structures they deemed architecturally and historically significant according to a sense of the city's heritage. Second, it effectively set this movement up alongside the city's contemporary growth machine rather than against it – positioning preservation as a potentially powerful tool in the city's "renaissance." Third, the depot experience also revealed the need for the organization to build a culture of preservation in the city to support their cause. At one level, this required the building of stronger coalitions with community groups, philanthropic foundations, business interests, and municipal agencies. At another level, this meant rooting their efforts in places that had special meaning to Milwaukee's identity and might inspire the most public and private interest—old, white-ethnic, working-class neighborhoods.[128]

Land Ethics put these lessons to work as they turned their attention to the preservation of the Walker's Point neighborhood in 1969. Located in an area between the Menomonee River and Greenfield Avenue and between Lake Michigan and 16th Street on Milwaukee's near south side, Walker's Point was one of the original three communities that formed into the city of Milwaukee in 1846. Named after its founder George H. Walker, the pioneer community became the seat of the city's southwestern expansion. Close to downtown, the Port of Milwaukee, and the canals and railyards of the Menomonee River Valley, Walker's point became an important incubator for the city's major manufacturers, like the Allis Reliance Works (forerunner to Allis-Chalmers), Allen-Bradley (now Rockwell Automation), Pfister and Vogel, Pawling and Harnischfeger (now Joy Global), and Cutler-Hammer. As a result, the area developed into a significant immigrant working class neighborhood through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition to a large

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[128] Roberts, "Party Lights Up Memories of Depot's Past," 5; House, "End of Line in Sight for Towering Depot," 1.

Norwegian community and other northern European immigrants, Walker's Point was an important early center of German life with its own Turner Hall, German and English Academy, Catholic and Lutheran congregations, and breweries away from the main center of the city's German community in Kilbourntown.[129] Expanding low-skill, low-income industrial work and affordable housing also attracted large groups of Polish workers to the area in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, and Latino workers in the early-to-mid-twentieth century.[130] Walker's Point became a vibrant center of the city's growing Latino community, with bars, restaurants, stores, Catholic parishes, and community organizations, by the 1960s.[131] Like other old nineteenth century neighborhoods in the areas surrounding downtown, however, urban renewal and development interests began razing large sections of Walker's Point for new freeways and parking lots for major manufacturers and businesses in the area in the mid-1960s.[132]

Attracted to its history as both a foundational community and industrial neighborhood, and its significant number of remaining nineteenth century buildings despite ongoing deterioration and demolition, Land Ethics' preservationists claimed Walker's Point as the embodiment of Milwaukee's white-ethnic working-class character. "We have the last remaining relatively intact 19th Century neighborhood here in Walker's Point," organization president Nicole Teweles claimed in a 1974 newsletter. "Few other cities in the Midwest can boast of

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[129] Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 182; Gurda, *Making of Milwaukee*, 62–64.
[130] Vargas, *Proletarians of the North*, 89–91; H. Yuan Tien, ed., *Milwaukee Metropolitan Area Fact Book, 1940, 1950, and 1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), 424, 426; Frances Beverstock and Robert P. Stuckert, eds., *Metropolitan Milwaukee Fact Book: 1970* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Urban Observatory, 1972), 272.
[131] Juan Alvarez Cuauhtemoc, Joseph A. Rodriguez, and Marc S. Rodriguez, "An Overview of Latino History in Milwaukee," *Myriad*, Spring 2005, 20–21; Joseph A. Rodriguez and Mark Shelley, "Latinos and Asians in Milwaukee," in *Perspectives on Milwaukee's Past*, ed. Margo Anderson and Victor Greene (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 164–66.
[132] Rodriguez and Shelley, "Latinos and Asians in Milwaukee," 165.

having so complete a working class neighborhood," a 1978 guide declared. "In the buildings, structures and open spaces of Historic Walker's Point, the visitor and resident can still savor the flavor of the American industrial city as it evolved during the 19th century. And he can do so on the very ground where early settlers lived and worked. Here are still standing many of the structures that were used by early developers and industrialists."[133] A 1975 organizational history declared Walker's Point "an outdoor museum on [a] free show of styles: Greek Revival, Gothic, Romanesque, Italianate, etc."[134] A 1978 report suggested that Walker's Point embodied "the prototype [of an] American industrial neighborhood. … It is significant as a place where respectable growth seems to have been halted. A place where concern seems not to have interfered."[135]

On one hand, preservationists saw something symbolic of both Milwaukee and American that had survived in the built environment of Walker's Point that they argued needed to be protected from further deterioration. Milwaukee preservationists also believed, on the other hand, that the site's close proximity to downtown and the city's river redevelopment efforts made it a potentially significant component of the city's future economic growth. "Walker's Point is the passageway [to downtown and the Menomonee River Valley]," the 1978 report claimed both literally and metaphorically. "A place of small homes and businesses, all complimenting the larger area. A neighborhood which speaks to a kind of honesty about its past and admits to its

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[133] Historic Walker's Point, Inc., "A Guide to Historic Walker's Point" 1978, box 4, folder 25, Historic Milwaukee, Inc. Records, Milwaukee Mss 133, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department (hereafter HMI Records).
[134] "A Brief History of HWP, Inc." 1975, box 2, folder 14, HMI Records.
[135] "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. History" 1978, box 2, folder 14, HMI Records.

future. A future which envisages no wanton destruction of a community but rather an enhancement of its resources which are its buildings and its people."[136]

With a jumpstart from a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1970, Milwaukee preservationists pursued the "preservation of local architectural history and the recycling for a modern useful life of the historical buildings and neighborhoods contained in the 'Walker's Point' area."[137] Reorganizing Land Ethics, Inc. as Historic Walker's Point, Inc. (HWP) in 1973, these preservationists engaged an array of both local and national tools for what they called the "total neighborhood preservation" of Walker's Point, akin to historic districts that emerged in other American cities, like Society Hill in Philadelphia, the French Quarter of New Orleans, and Georgetown in Washington DC – especially after the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. is trying to … preserve not just one building, but a community," organization president Nicole Teweles maintained; "to keep the present charm, the neighborhood atmosphere, the smallness, the closeness, the human scale of the community."[138]

HWP also built coalitions with local organizations, like the Junior League of Milwaukee, a women's volunteer charitable organization (located on the East Side) that partnered closely with Land Ethics in the Walker's Point preservation effort in 1970 and forming HWP in 1973, the Green Tree Garden Club who contributed to landscaping projects in the area, and the Milwaukee Trade and Technical High School (now Bradley Technical High School) who

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[136] Ibid.
[137] Historic Walker's Point, Inc., "Articles of Incorporation" April 25, 1973, box 1, folder 3, HMI Records; "Funding Proposal Draft," n.d., box 1, folder 31, HMI Records.
[138] "Rebirth of an Historic Community" n.d., box 1, folder 10, HMI Records.

provided newsletter and literature printing services.[139] The appointment of Mary Ellen Wietczykowski (later Young and Pagel), an extremely active member of Land Ethics from its early days, as chair of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission in 1971[1972?] further bolstered the Walker's Point preservation efforts. Wietczykowski maintained a close working relationship with the organization, and effectively helped to connect their efforts with both local and national agencies and programs.[140] Additionally, HWP arranged for experienced preservationists like Reid Williamson, Jr. from the Historic Savannah Foundation, Arthur P. Ziegler from Landmarks Planning, Inc. in Pittsburgh, and Robert L. Raley from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to come to Milwaukee to give lectures and offer instruction and advice on how the Walker's Point preservation should proceed.[141]

However, HWP's preservationists also expressed concern about how such an endeavor could potentially displace the existing Latino community of Walker's Point, and the desire to keep it the functioning working class neighborhood that it had historically been. "It remains a living, working class community where one meets the members of the newer ethnic groups, the Hispanics," a 1978 report notes. "These people reside in Walker's Point as they attempt to pursue their personal quest for fulfillment of the American dream. Alongside those whose ancestors were the urban pioneers, the original residents of Walker's Point. All striving to survive."[142] To HWP, therefore, Walker's Point's Latino residents were the current standard-bearers of the neighborhood's working class tradition – the living embodiment of the neighborhood's historic character. Quietly embedded in this rhetoric was also the notion that the neighborhood's Latino

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[139] Mrs. John Hessler to Mrs. W. A. Teipel, Jr., December 14, 1973, box 1, folder 18, HMI Records; "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. Meeting Minutes" 1973, box 1, folder 42, HMI Records.
[140] "Milwaukee Landmarks Commission" n.d., box 1, folder 41, HMI Records.
[141] "Historic Walker's Point Correspondence" n.d., box 1, folder 18, HMI Records.
[142] "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. History."

residents had taken good care of the built environment that they had inherited, and therefore *deserved* preservationist attention - implying that there were *undeserving* residents in other parts of the city. "The Chicano inhabitants are pleasant and quiet people," one report on the preservation efforts noted. "Generally speaking the large homes in the neighborhood are now rooming houses; the small ones rented. All are neat and clean with abundant flowers. … The cast iron trim, wrought iron fences and gates of the bygone era are still standing."

In order to help avoid such a displacement, HWP established a "revolving fund" that would allow the organization to purchase properties, create restoration grants, and make low-interest restoration loans available to residents from a general pool financed through individual grants and fundraising efforts.[143] "We are particularly interested in increasing the housing available in the area," organization president Nicole Teweles declared of the revolving fund in 1974. "It might, for instance, be possible to provide for new low rent apartments on the upper floors of commercial buildings."[144] They also actively sought participation from area residents and businesses in their organization, making the establishment of an accessible office within the community a major priority, and established bilingual outreach programs and literature, including a newsletter and even a children's coloring book designed with artwork from the children of the Cardinal Stritch College Junior Art Program.[145]

Despite these remarkable gestures towards a more inclusive vision of preservation, and the desire to make Historic Walker's Point a "people-oriented project [that] would help the area

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[143] "Resolution to Be Adopted by Board of Directors of Historic Walker's Point as Recommended by the Steering Committee" June 26, 1973, box 2, folder 14, HMI Records; Historic Walker's Point, Inc., "Articles of Incorporation."
[144] "Restoration May Bring More Low Cost Housing," *Historic Walker's Point News* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1974): 4, box 2, folder 6, HMI Records.
[145] "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. Meeting Minutes"; "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. Newsletters" n.d., box 2, folder 6, HMI Records; Historic Walker's Point, Inc., "Historic Walker's Point Coloring Book" 1975, box 1, folder 14, HMI Records.

to revitalize itself without the dislocation of its residents," most of HWP's actions seemed more concerned with the neighborhood's aesthetics over the practical, everyday uses and needs of the community.[146] While certainly improving access to funding and other resources residents needed to improve their housing, HWP prescribed their use for advancing a specific vision of how the neighborhood should look over what residents deemed necessary in order to live.[147] This was further illuminated in a 1971 article in *Wisconsin Arts Fare* that noted that Land Ethics' vision for Walker's Point included "plans that houses will be sold with a restrictive deed, so that they must be fixed up in a certain way."[148] Such a system rendered HWP as saviors of a community in need of basic capital improvements. However, by holding the purse strings, so to speak, HWP controlled what those improvements looked like, making sure they fit their vision.

The problems with this kind of provisioning became apparent in HWP's restoration of the Henry Fischedick Building in 1973. The board of directors from Centro Cultural Y Educativo, Chicano-Boriqua (CCE), a community organization helping residents of all ages earn high school diplomas that had occupied the 1890 "cream city brick" building at the time, approached HWP for help with restoring the building – HWP's first major project in the neighborhood. Citing its significance as "an outstanding example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style," HWP obtained matching grants from the Wisconsin American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and the Walter and Olive Stiemke Foundation of Milwaukee, and coordinated design help from Esperanza Unida and the Southside Community Design Center.[149] However,

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[146] "A Brief History of HWP, Inc."
[147] "Revolving Fund to Be Community Loan Source," *Historic Walker's Point News* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 2, box 2, folder 6, HMI Records.
[148] Betsy Whiteside, "Walker's Point Restored," *Wisconsin Arts Fare* 2, no. 4 (November 15, 1971), box 1, folder 13, HMI Records.
[149] Historic Walker's Point, Inc., "Annual Report, 1974-1975 Fiscal Year: People Helping People to Help a Special Place" 1975, box 1, folder 1, HMI Records; R. Richard Wagner to Janet Hessler, July 16, 1974, box 1, folder 18,

these efforts were only limited to the exterior façade and entryway of the building, neglecting its other more functional parts. "We as staff and students who are the ones who operate and use the building every day are grateful to you for the work and concern you have taken," William Quiles and his students wrote to HWP. "Although we are concerned with what seems to be your policy in renovating the 'face' of buildings while leaving the interior untouched. The community needs a complete remodeling job not just its face."[150] Moreover, Quiles added, "We don't like the color it was painted, nor were we consulted about it."[151]

This focus on exterior aesthetics revealed that, despite its community empowerment rhetoric, HWP was more interested in Walker's Point's role in enhancing the city's future growth and reclaiming its heritage. A significant piece of this was a desire to turn Walker's Point more towards the destination-based economy familiar in preservation projects in other American cities. "This has always been a neighborhood of tradesmen and merchants, and we want it to stay just that way but with a new sense of life and pride and an increase in trade," Nicole Teweles argued somewhat contradictorily. "The average resident will be proud to live in such an interesting neighborhood. It will be cleaner, nicer, better-looking. It will be a more humane place to live. It will be fun to walk down the street."[152] Lecturers from the National Trust, the Historic Savannah Foundation, and other significant preservation endeavors reported the massive returns on investments in their projects were recording from tourism. Armed with these numbers, HWP affectively appealed to several major Milwaukee businesses and foundations for financial support and investment. Furthermore, despite the celebrated presence of Latino Walker's Point

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HMI Records; R. Richard Wagner to Janet Hessler, July 18, 1974, box 1, folder 18, HMI Records; "Funding Proposal Draft."

[150] William Quiles to Historical Walker's Point, Inc., February 12, 1973, box 1, folder 18, HMI Records.

[151] Ibid.

[152] "Restoration May Bring More Low Cost Housing."

residents and business owners, HWP's board of directors consisted of a far larger number of people from the East Side, Mequon, Wauwatosa, and other affluent parts of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area, and, increasingly over time, representatives from major corporations like Allis Chalmers, First Wisconsin National Bank, and Northwestern Mutual.[153] HWP's efforts might therefore be viewed in part as a class-based claim to this space, so valuably close to downtown growth investments.

Connected to these class-based implications to HWPs efforts was also a claim to Walker's Point as a historically white ethnic space. This was revealed in HWP's prevailing emphasis on the neighborhood's nineteenth century origins, and disregard or even rejection of significant transformations that were made by neighborhood residents in the time since. The first such selection was the delineation of the Walker's Point Preservation District, bounded by West Florida, South Second, West Scott, and South Fifth Streets in 1970.[154] "Its 19th Century character is best represented in [this] smaller area," a 1974 HWP newsletter declared. "It is this area, where the largest number of historic buildings remain as a neighborhood unit, that Historic Walker's Point, Inc. is concentrating its first efforts."[155] These lines were "finalized" in meetings with property owners, city planners, the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission, and state preservation office in preparation for placing a Walker's Point Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. "Paul Sprague who drew the lines for the Historic Walker's Point District used some natural lines, such as the expressway and Scott Street," a 1979 HWP

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[153] "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. Board of Directors" 1975, box 1, folder 6, HMI Records; "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. Board of Directors" 1977, box 1, folder 6, HMI Records; "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. Board of Directors" 1978, box 1, folder 6, HMI Records.
[154] Patricia Roberts, "Tour Points Up Landmarks," *Milwaukee Journal*, November 22, 1970, sec. 6, box 1, folder 13, HMI Records.
[155] "Historic Area Maps Plans for New Life," *Historic Walker's Point News* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1974): 1–2, box 2, folder 6, HMI Records.

newsletter article on the new Historic District reported. "Lines to the east and north were more difficult as there were modern intrusions that would not contribute to a district," the article continued suggesting that more modern buildings were intrusions, while the expressway was natural. "One thing was certain," the article noted, "the [vacant] P&V Atlas Industrial buildings [along the Menomonee River] were an integral part of what it was that made Walker's Point unique and important. Thus, their inclusion was key to what was and is the essence of this urban 19th century neighborhood."[156]

The development of the Walker's Point Historic District was therefore a complex process that carefully selected and imposed a vision of the neighborhood's heritage and significance. Although the boundaries to Walker's Point were historically unclear, with edges that varied organically with parish affiliations, employment, and social relationships, the Walker's Point Historic District instituted hard boundaries on the area based on certain contemporary conditions – the expressway, the concentration of remaining nineteenth century buildings, and growth interests. [157] It thus not only ignored how the neighborhood actually functioned in its present, but also imposed a vision of its past, diluted to the mere presence of nineteenth century buildings, that ignored how it actually functioned historically as well.

Other processes of selection occurred with specific sites within the preservation area. Once the preservation district was established in 1970, volunteers from both HWP and the Junior League went to work conducting research on all neighborhood buildings – focusing specifically on deeds and other property records. "In researching a building, the worker starts with the building's address and proceeds to obtain the legal description from City Hall or the County

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[156] "The Making of an Historic District," *Historic Walker's Point News* 6, no. 1 (March 1979): 1, box 2, folder 6, HMI Records.
[157] Ibid.; Mary Ellen Young to Historic Walker's Point, Inc., March 31, 1975, box 1, folder 18, HMI Records.

Court House," a 1971 article on the Walker's Point preservation effort explained. "She checks with the Register of Deeds and Permits for all owners' names and any major alterations done. City directories are also used to obtain the names of owners, especially those prior to 1900. The local history room in the city library will tell when the building was constructed by whom, and the owner's name and occupation."[158]

By identifying the origins of each building in Walker's Point, determining their historical significance, and direct preservation efforts from there, this research also effectively claimed white ethnic rights to the space. As the article quoted above notes, "The house is always known by the name of the original owner," ensuring that the significance of any subsequent uses of the building within the evolving Walker's Point community remained secondary to its origins.[159] So, despite the importance of the CCE to the existing Latino community of contemporary Walker's Point, for instance, HWP identified the building it used as significant instead for its original owner, the Prussian-born cigar manufacturer Henry Fischedick, and labeled it the Fischedick Building.[160] Moreover, when Juan Pedroza purchased a house in the historic district in 1975, organization president Nicole Teweles wrote a letter introducing him to the HWP organization, and informing him that his house was the William George Bruce house, built in 1896.[161] Although Walker's Point had become a major center of the city's Latino community, such efforts made it clear that it really "belonged" in Milwaukee's white ethnic hegemonic realm—the CCE, Juan Pedroza, and their fellow "newcomers" were merely caretakers. And by focusing their preservation concerns on commercial buildings, homes, and churches, HWP advanced an

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[158] Whiteside, "Walker's Point Restored."
[159] Ibid.
[160] *History of Milwaukee, Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 324, 1483.
[161] Nicole Teweles to Juan Pedroza, February 5, 1975, box 1, folder 18, HMI Records.

idealized vision of the nineteenth century American industrial neighborhood that excluded representations of industrial exploitation and working class radicalism that had real relevance to the neighborhood's present conditions.

These claims were also reinforced within HWP's pedagogical framework. Throughout its endeavor, for instance, HWP ran a series of bus and walking tours through Walker's Point for the "community at large," specially arranged groups for schools and organizations, and a few in Spanish for Latino residents.[162] These tours focused on specific buildings in the district that HWP deemed architecturally and historically significant. One frequent stop on these tours, for instance, was Holy Trinity-Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church located on the corner of South 4th and West Bruce Streets. Although it had become a significant parish for the large number of Catholics in the neighborhood's Latino community, HWP's tours emphasized the church's German Catholic origins, and referred to the building most often with its original name, Holy Trinity.[163] These tours also highlighted the Mathias Lamers building, the Cream City brick building built by a Dutch-born shoe retailer on South Fifth Street in 1883. At this stop, the HWP tour guides would discuss the significance of the area's German-dominated business district, and its annual *Jahrmarkt*. "An outdoor event," the HWP docent guide explained of the *Jahrmarkt*, "Grove Street was lined with booths and stands where the merchants and vendors sold their wares to swarms of people."[164]

HWP also published guidebooks, newsletters, and the aforementioned children's coloring book—many printed in both English and Spanish. This literature highlighted Walker's Point's

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[162] "Historic Walker's Point, Inc. Meeting Minutes."
[163] "Holy Trinity–Our Lady of Guadalupe Church" (Docent Guide, n.d.), box 1, folder 10, HMI Records; Roberts, "Tour Points Up Landmarks."
[164] "The Mathias Lamers Building" (Docent Guide, n.d.), box 1, folder 10, HMI Records.

origins as a predominantly German and Scandanavian community and nineteenth century urban industrial neighborhood. "Older buildings, like your grandparents, often have interesting and funny stories to tell," the 1975 *Historic Walker's Point Coloring Book* explains. "The buildings in Walker's Point, a neighborhood on the South Side of Milwaukee can speak in English, German, or in Scandinavian ... languages spoken here over one hundred years ago when the neighborhood was young." There was no mention of buildings that spoke Spanish, or consideration of the neighborhoods existing Latino community. The coloring book also accentuated features of historic material culture in the neighborhood, like clapboard siding, cobblestones, gas lighting, and Cream City bricks to children that might have been familiar with these things from MPM's Streets of Old Milwaukee exhibit. This literature also often suggested that life was much better there at the time than in its current state. "A century ago, Walker's Point was a bustling, thriving neighborhood where merchants, laborers, seamen and civic leaders earned a comfortable living," a 1974 HWP newsletter article recounted in both English and Spanish. "Today the horse-drawn buggies and the crowds of shoppers at South Fifth Street's Jahrmarkt are gone. Walker's Point had grown from an Indian settlement to a comfortable 19th Century community populated by Germans, Swedes and Englishmen. Its residents today claim a heritage of these as well as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Polish, Serbian and Greek nationalities."[165] So, despite the rhetoric of not wanting to displace Walker's Point's existing residents, HWP's idealized emphasis on the neighborhood's nineteenth century German origins made it clear to its more recent Latino inhabitants that they were merely tenants of inherently white ethnic space.

Although it had succeeded in its quest to establish a Walker's Point Historic District that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, HWP organizers felt that their

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[165] "Historic Area Maps Plans for New Life," 2.

venture was becoming increasingly Sisyphean in the face of the area's continued economic struggles. "Those involved in the program from its inception began to feel the full weight of problems within Walker's Point, problems which are not solved with traditional historic preservation activities," a 1979 internal report indicated. "With a limited amount of resources, HWP found itself not only unable to successfully confront these problems, but also had difficulty establishing an office which was able to effectively carry on the already-initiated activities. The presence of problems outside the realm of preservation impacted heavily on the work within historic preservation."[166] In 1980, HWP organized a separate development corporation, the Walker's Point Development Corp., to more aggressively acquire real estate and attract development interests into the neighborhood.[167] HWP reorganized as Historic Milwaukee, Inc. (HMI) in December 1981, and expanded its focus on research, tours, literature, and other educational programs, and the preservation of buildings downtown, the East Side, and other parts of the city.[168]

Much like BSMA, HWP's work in Walker's Point revealed the power and limitations of self-help community organizing in relationship to neighborhood revitalization. On one hand, preservationists from outside of the neighborhood created important new connections with community members to improvise solutions to substantial challenges in the neighborhood's physical, social, and economic landscape. However, HWP's growth-through-preservation

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[166] Robert B. Monnat, "A Preliminary Report to the Board of Directors, Historic Walker's Point, Inc.: The Creation of a Neighborhood-Based Development Corporation for the Walker's Point Neighborhood" December 11, 1979, box 2, folder 14, HMI Records.
[167] "Development Corporation Begins Operations, Historic Walker's Point Continues," *Historic Walker's Point News* 6, no. 5 (April 1980): 1; Monnat, "A Preliminary Report to the Board of Directors, Historic Walker's Point, Inc.: The Creation of a Neighborhood-Based Development Corporation for the Walker's Point Neighborhood."
[168] "Summary of Organization and Activities" n.d., box 2, folder 14, HMI Records; "Historic Milwaukee, Inc. Newsletters" n.d., box 2, folder 7, HMI Records.

mission did not mesh particularly well with the needs of the neighborhood's growing working-class Latino community. Yet, together, the efforts of BSMA and HWP reveal important community-level engagement with Milwaukee's larger civic revitalization efforts. Heritage renewal methods formed downtown offered neighborhoods new avenues to shape their own socio-economic future. However, such roads to renaissance also reinforced existing class and racial lines in Milwaukee's old neighborhoods. New redevelopment efforts affirmed business interests and property values as top neighborhood priorities, and emphasis on the working-class white-ethnic character of Brady Street and Walker's Point claimed these spaces as inherently white. By the 1980s, however, BSMA and HWP's had left many of their ambitious projects incomplete—either due to internal conflicts, or opportunities elsewhere. They had done their job, though, laying important groundwork for future neoliberal redevelopment efforts in the 1990s through 2010s, including modernist condo buildings, "gastro-pubs," and chic retail outlets. The new Brady Street Improvement District revived the Brady Street Festival in 2006—sdriven in large part by Glorioso's Italian Market. Still a major Latino community, Walker's Point is also home to several antique shops, art galleries, and upscale restaurants. Nearly fifty years after their establishment, BSMA and HWP's visions remain key to how these neighborhoods reimagined themselves as important cultural and entertainment destinations, and appealing places for young Milwaukeeans to live, work, and play.

CONCLUSION

The Contemporary Racial Politics of Old Milwaukee

Around midnight on the night of August 13, 2016, a group of city leaders and police officials called an impromptu press conference at Milwaukee's District 3 Police Station to update the public on a crisis that was developing in Sherman Park—a predominantly black, but racially and economically mixed neighborhood on the city's northwest side. Like similar communities in Ferguson, Baltimore, and other American cities that faced a new wave of racial unrest in the wake of police violence in the mid-2010s, Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood experienced an uprising in the hours after police fatally shot Sylville Smith in an area yard after he had fled on foot from a traffic stop. Crowds of angry residents—particularly black youth (who some city leaders and local talk radio pundits claimed had included Black Lives Matter protesters, anarchists, and other "outside agitators")—burned and looted neighborhood businesses, broke windows, fired guns, and engaged in violent confrontations with the police. As news of mounting damage and arrests accompanied the smell of smoke that spread throughout the city, Mayor Barrett reassured Milwaukeeans that the police, who he claimed had so far "shown an amazing amount of restraint," would restore order in the community, and called on parents for help. "If you love your son, if you love your daughter, text them, call them, pull them by their ears, get them home," he pleaded.[614] The mayor's comments echoed common assumptions that racial unrest, like crime, stemmed from a progressive degeneration of traditional social relationships and family structures in transient black communities that made

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[614] Aaron Mark, Jacob Carpenter, and Ashley Luthern, "Violence Erupts After Officer-Involved Shooting," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, August 14, 2016, http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/crime/2016/08/13/report-1-dead-officer-involved-shooting/88689152/.

black youth more prone to violence and recalcitrance. However, the unrest that erupted in Sherman Park that night threatened an otherwise "very, very good neighborhood … where there is a lot of people who have lived there [for] thirty, forty, fifty years," the mayor asserted. "They deserve to live in a safe neighborhood, and we're going to do everything we can to make that possible."[615]

Following the mayor's remarks, Khalif Rainey, one of the Aldermen representing the Sherman Park area in the Milwaukee Common Council, offered an alternative narrative. Rather than the shortcomings of black communities that the mayor had pointed to, Rainey instead argued that the events in the neighborhood that night reflected a "powder keg" of injustices that black Milwaukeeans disproportionately experienced in their daily lives as the city became a national leader in rates of unemployment, mass incarceration, and under-education. "This entire community has sat back and witnessed how Milwaukee, Wisconsin has become the worst place to live for African Americans in the entire country," Rainey proclaimed. "The black people of Milwaukee … are tired of living under this oppression"—a resentment, he indicated, that had been clearly demonstrated in that evening's unrest. "What happened tonight may have not been right," Rainey affirmed. "But no one can deny the fact that there's … racial problems here in Milwaukee." He suggested that the events of that night represented a "warning cry" to the entire city that these problems needed to "not [be] examined, but rectified... immediately." If racial injustice remained unchecked, Rainey predicted, the city's downtown and its ongoing redevelopment efforts might be next. "You're one day away," he warned.[616]

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[615] "'Things Got Out of Hand:' Violence Breaks Out in Milwaukee Following Officer-Involved Shooting," *FOX6Now.com*, August 14, 2016, http://fox6now.com/2016/08/13/milwaukee-police-sheriffs-office-responding-to-disturbance-near-n-sherman-auer/.

[616] Mark, Carpenter, and Luthern, "Violence Erupts After Officer-Involved Shooting"; UpnUp News, "Milwaukee Alderman Khalif Rainey," *YouTube*, August 15, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwThSPBNYmQ; Will

Sherelle Smith, the younger sister of Sylville Smith, the man shot by police, expressed similar notions that the unrest reflected deeply ingrained racial divisions in Milwaukee's social fabric. "You're all [white Milwaukeeans] looking at us [black Milwaukeeans] like we're the enemies, like we're the problem," Smith told a group of local and national news media the day following the unrest. Consciously or subconsciously channeling James Baldwin, Smith asserted, "We're niggers to you all. But we're not niggers to us. … We're survivors. You don't know what the fuck we've been through every day, with each other, … arguing and fighting with everybody to keep our peace of mind," she declared. Smith suggested that white Milwaukee residents, city officials, and media outlets misinterpreted the efforts of black residents to survive the city's uneven socio-economic landscape, broadly painting black communities as dysfunctional ghettos comprised of "thugs" and "welfare queens" that only intensified the city's racial divisions. She urged white residents unfamiliar with the community to "come down here and talk to us." Yet, Smith also openly expressed the threat that Milwaukee's racial problems posed to the security of its prevailing socio-economic order that Alderman Rainey had warned of the night before. Rather than burning down businesses that the community relied on, Smith suggested community members "take [the uprising] to the suburbs," which she implied was a key source of the city's racial resentments. "You all want to hurt somebody, take that shit further out," she declared.[617]

For some Milwaukeeans, the uprising of August 2016 seemed eerily familiar. "You can hear echoes from 1967 in the violence that erupted Saturday near Sherman Park," *Journal*

Tchakirides, "'Not Examined, but Rectified': Let Milwaukee Heed Khalif Rainey's Advice," *Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service*, August 17, 2016, http://milwaukeenns.org/2016/08/17/not-examined-but-rectified-let-milwaukee-heed-khalif-raineys-advice/.

[617] Blacklifematter Pittsburgh, "NEW RAW VIDEO Milwaukee 2016 Riot Police Victim Sylville Smith's Sisters Speaks," *YouTube*, August 15, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jpz5DDJYBM; Emanuella Grinberg and Thom Patterson, "Tensions High After Milwaukee Police Shooting," *CNN*, August 16, 2016, http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/14/us/milwaukee-violence-police-shooting/index.html.

Sentinel columnist Jim Stingl wrote in the days following the unrest. "Anger. Arson. Gunfire. Looting. Rocks Flying. Vandalism. Arrests. Blame. Calls for calm. That was [also] the scene beginning the night of July 30, 1967, on Milwaukee's north side and spilling into downtown."[618] Although occurring approximately two miles away and nearly fifty years apart from each other, the Sherman Park Uprising of 2016 and the Milwaukee Riot of 1967 indeed shared some striking similarities. Indicating that the events in Sherman Park that summer were clearly ignited by the police shooting of Sylville Smith, Stingl suggested that the origins of the city's 1967 unrest were less obvious. "It just seemed to be Milwaukee's turn after riots in Newark, Detroit, and other cities," he claimed.[619] Yet, as historian Patrick Jones argues, police harassment also played a key role in generating the 1967 uprising—most expressly in a battle that erupted between a crowd of disaffected black youth and police who had responded to reports of a fight outside of a popular downtown nightclub. This incident grew into a full-scale "riot" as it built on the long-escalating resentments between black Milwaukeeans and police who regularly and often brutally harassed community members and civil rights activists in their increasingly authoritarian approach to policing black neighborhoods, Jones explains.[620] Commonalities in the roles police harassment and brutality of black residents played in provoking these two uprisings—separated by nearly half a century—speaks to a crisis of policing that has prevailed much longer in Milwaukee than the rhetoric surrounding recent instances of police-community conflict in the city suggests.

Both events also generated tremendous anxieties among white Milwaukeeans feared what such racial unrest might mean for their future and continued privilege in the increasingly multi-

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[618] Jim Stingl, "A Look Back at Milwaukee's 1967 Riot," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, August 16, 2016, http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/columnists/jim-stingl/2016/08/16/look-back-milwaukees-1967-riot/88825546/.
[619] Ibid.
[620] Jones, *The Selma of the North*, 143–68; Aukofer, *City With A Chance*.

racial city. Popular conceptions of Milwaukee as "the city of beer and good times, a clean city, a place to raise a family, the city of *gemütlichkeit*" were "shattered" by the 1967 riot, journalist and author Frank Aukofer claimed. As a result, many white area residents and visitors feared coming downtown, so close to the site of unrest. Rather than acknowledging the deteriorating conditions in black neighborhoods that generated the outburst of resentment, Aukofer notes, Mayor Henry Maier blamed local and national press for inciting the riot by exaggerating the city's racial discord in their coverage.[621] The events in Sherman Park shed similar doubts on Milwaukee's widely heralded twenty-first century "renaissance." While very localized and far from downtown, the images of burning buildings and crowds of angry black youth, repeatedly televised that August night and in the following days, represented a more menacing vision of Milwaukee than the pleasant urban playground growth advocates had proposed in their plans for a new NBA arena, the ongoing development of an entertainment complex in the former Pabst Brewery, and other downtown redevelopment projects. If the destruction in Sherman Park was allowed to escalate, white residents and city power brokers worried that, as Alderman Rainey warned, these downtown developments and the revival they represented might be targeted next.

These anxieties and the comments of Alderman Rainey and Sherelle Smith suggest that the Sherman Park Uprising, like the 1967 Milwaukee Riot before it, was rooted very much in how Milwaukeeans thought (and continue to think) about value and belonging in urban space. As this dissertation has demonstrated, white ethnicity, and particularly Germanness, was central to Milwaukee's civic identity through the twentieth century. This carried over into the twenty-first century as many residents maintain claims to German heritage, bratwurst and sauerkraut remain staples of festivals and picnics, fans sing the "Roll Out the Barrel" polka during the seventh

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[621] Aukofer, *City With A Chance*, 31–38.

inning stretch of the city's Major League Milwaukee Brewers Baseball games, and the names of Milwaukee's historic German brewing giants—Pabst, Schlitz, Blatz, and Miller—still adorn key city spaces. Germanness also remains important to Milwaukee's collective memory, as many local historians and other writers celebrate the uniqueness of Milwaukee's German cultural traditions and institutions, and the city's historic reputation as the "German Athens" of America. Historian George Lipsitz argues that these "spatial imaginaries" often inscribe "social warrants" of racial privilege and belonging into urban landscapes. Narratives that emphasize white ethnic productivity, deserving, and righteousness over what commonly portrayed as lazy, undeserving, and criminal people of color have historically informed discriminatory policing, lending, land use, and employment policies and practices, as well as governed access to education, housing, and public services.[622] Black Milwaukeeans disproportionately experienced alarming rates of unemployment, incarceration, and under-education as the industrial work that had defined the ascendancy of European immigrants and their descendants in the city through the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century increasingly left the city for more promising labor markets in the suburbs and abroad. Meanwhile, city officials, business leaders, and other growth interests employed elements of the city's German heritage and nostalgia for its nineteenth century "heyday" in the development of new civic festivals, downtown entertainment and recreational spaces, revitalized neighborhood commercial districts, and other projects designed to help re-orient the city towards a post-industrial tourist, entertainment, and service economy. By rooting the city's "new" economy in visions of an "Old Milwaukee" rooted in Old World heritage, these

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[622] George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 25–50; Lipsitz, "Policing Place and Taxing Time on Skid Row," 134–35; George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, revised ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

projects secured white privilege in the city's changing economy, and encouraged white ethnic residents to think of, and politically protect, these spaces as their own.

For black Milwaukeeans, such spatial imaginaries produced a socio-economic geography of perpetual alienation. As growth interests connected their restructuring projects to nostalgic visions and aesthetics of the city's white ethnic heritage, they created spaces where people of color seemed out of place, and communities in which their needs and interests were secondary to those of their white ethnic neighbors—if they were heard at all. This was a spatial imaginary of Milwaukee as an inherently white city with troublesome black tenants. Such visions framed the police as guardians of white spatial privilege downtown and in neighborhoods throughout the city, and city and county security resources were mobilized accordingly against the transgressions of people of color. Manifestations of Milwaukee's white spatial imaginary in uneven policing were made painfully clear in the fatal officer-involved shooting of Dontre Hamilton in downtown's Red Arrow Park in April, 2014. Hamilton, who suffered from mental illness, was discharged from a county health facility, and waited in the park across the street from City Hall for his brother to pick him up. According to witness accounts, workers at a Starbucks store in the park, worried by his presence, called the police to check on Hamilton and ultimately have him removed. After responding police had initially concluded that he was "doing nothing illegal," and that the Starbucks employees "should stop calling," Officer Christopher Manney attempted oust Hamilton from the park. In the ensuing confrontation where Manney claimed Hamilton had seized and then threatened him with his own baton, the officer shot Hamilton fourteen times, killing him.[623] Although Manney was later fired for violating

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[623] Kelly R. Brandmeyer, "Witness Tells Different Story About MPD's Fatal Shooting of Man in Park," *Milwaukee Community Journal*, May 10, 2014, https://communityjournal.net/tag/starbucks-in-red-arrow-park/.

departmental procedures in his handling of Hamilton, Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn maintained that the shooting, while regrettable, was ultimately due to the unfair burden the city's growing mental health crisis had placed on the police—not prevailing patterns of police brutality.[624] The incident also demonstrated the violence behind white spatial privilege in downtown Milwaukee. Hamilton's mere presence in the park was enough of a transgression that Officer Manney felt it necessary to engage and ultimately kill him.

Different groups have worked to try to challenge the city's white spatial imaginary. After Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm announced, just days before Christmas, that he would not charge Manney for Hamilton's death, large groups of protestors responded with marches through downtown streets that blocked traffic, and staged a "die in" at Mayfair Mall in the western suburb of Wauwatosa, laying on the ground "dead" amid the busy holiday shoppers.[625] Red Arrow Park was especially symbolic, not only as the site of Hamilton's death at the hands of police, but also as the location of the city's ice skating rink. Protestors held large "Black Lives Matter" rallies in the park that disrupted the serenity of many families' holiday skating rituals, and symbolically (and briefly) changed the park's name to Dontre's Park.[626]

These demonstrations echoed a 1990 campaign, led by local activist and Alderman Michael McGee, to eliminate the symbolic racial barrier represented in the abrupt change of the formerly named Third Street from Dr. Martin Luther King Drive on the north side to Old World

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[624] Cary Docter and Katie Delong, "Chief Flynn: 'We Are Not Doing Enough for the Mentally Ill,'" *Fox6Now.com*, May 1, 2014, http://fox6now.com/2014/05/01/update-flynn-to-identify-suspect-shot-by-officer-at-red-arrow-park/.
[625] Jenna Sachs, "Protesters Stage a 'Die-In' at Mayfair Mall in Support of Dontre Hamilton," *FOX6Now.com*, December 23, 2014, http://fox6now.com/2014/12/23/developing-protesters-stage-a-die-in-at-mayfair-mall/; Jabril Faraj, "No Charges Brought in Dontre Hamilton Shooting, Federal Review to Come," *Milwaukee Stories*, December 23, 2014, https://milwaukeestories.org/2014/12/23/no-charges-brought-in-dontre-hamilton-shooting-federal-review-to-come/.
[626] "Dontre Hamilton Protesters Gather at Red Arrow Park as Ice Skating Begins," *CBS58*, December 4, 2014, http://www.cbs58.com/news/dontre-hamilton-protesters-gather-at-red-arrow-park-as-ice-skating-begins.

Third Street downtown. McGee and protestors called for the city to rename the street "King Drive all the way."[627] This campaign quickly ended, however, as rumors spread that a black militant group had poisoned Usinger's sausages, whose plant was located on Old World Third Street. While no evidence of tampering was ever found, the company recalled 80,000 pounds of their bratwurst, summer sausage, hot dogs, smoked sausage, and polish sausage from area stores as a precaution.[628]

Although these efforts made little permanent changes to Milwaukee's white spatial imaginary, they did reveal that alternative visions of a more inclusive Milwaukee were possible. By targeting and symbolically transforming the boundaries of white privilege in the city, protestors contested white ethnic spatial claims with their own claims to downtown and spaces throughout the city. By blocking traffic and holiday shopping, they disrupted "business as usual" in the city's racialized geography, and made everyday instances of racial alienation plainly visible to people who would have likely not noticed otherwise. Yet, as the unrest in Sherman Park in the summer of 2016 indicates, diffusing the "powder keg" of Milwaukee's racial injustices will have to go further than changing street names, and occupying streets, parks, and shopping centers. It must address larger questions of the uneven distribution power and privilege across the city's socio-economic landscape, and how notions of heritage and nostalgic visions of history justify and reinforce white ethnic claims to urban space. In this context, we might take Alderman Rainey's warning that downtown might be next, not as a threat, but as a challenge to the city to rethink its spatial imaginaries, and embrace a more inclusive vision of the city as a

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[627] Hoelscher, Zimmerman, and Bawden, "Milwaukee's German Renaissance," 401.
[628] Ibid., 402; "Usinger's Completes Recall After Threat," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 23, 1990, sec. 1, pp. 1, 22.

culturally dynamic place where people from different backgrounds and heritages can pursue their interests and have an equal say in the policies and initiatives that affect them.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

PhD: Global History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, August 2017

- Major Advisor: Dr. Rachel I. Buff
- Dissertation: "Making an Old World Milwaukee: German Heritage, Nostalgia and the Reshaping of the Twentieth Century City"

MA: U.S. History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, August 2009

- Advisor: Dr. Michael Gordon
- Thesis: "Suds and Solidarity: Outdoor Leisure Spaces and Working Class Identities in Milwaukee, 1880-1925"

BA: History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, May 2005

PUBLICATIONS

Entries for *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee*, edited by Amanda I. Seligman and Margo Anderson. Print edition under contract with Northern Illinois University Press. Digital edition online through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at emke.uwm.edu.

Allis-Chalmers Co.
Amusement Parks
Beer Gardens and Beer Halls
Blatz Brewing Co.
Brewing Industry
Bronzeville
Christoffel, Harold
Communist Party
Conroy, Catherine
County Roads
Cudahy Corporation
Fishing, Commercial
Food Processing
Friedrich, Jacob
Gettelman Brewing Co.
Historic Preservation
Ice Industry
Insurance
Jones Island
Leather Industry
Meatpacking
Miller Brewing Co.
Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance
Pabst Brewing Co.
Printing
Pfister & Vogel Co.
Quad/Graphics
Recreation, Outdoor
Schilling, Robert
Schlitz Brewing Co.
Tourism
Waukesha County Technical College

"*Gemütlichkeit* on the Midway: German Culture at Milwaukee's Turn-of-the-Century Amusement Parks." *Milwaukee County History* 1, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 51-59.

"Eckhart G. Grohmann." In *Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies, 1720 to the Present*, vol. 5, edited by R. Daniel Wadhwani. German Historical Institute.

- http://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=150

"History of Social Networks, 1865-1899." In *Encyclopedia of Social Networks*, edited by George A. Barnett. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2011.

Review of *Soul of a Port: The History and Evolution of the Port of Milwaukee*, by Leah Dobkin. *Michigan Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 103-105.

"'Opportunities for Defiance': Embracing Guerilla History and Moving Beyond Scott Walker's Wisconsin," with John R. Terry, Beth Robinson, Jacob Glicklich, and Dawson Barrett. *LaborOnline*. Labor and Working Class History Association.

- http://lawcha.org/wordpress/2013/08/16/opportunities-for-defiance-embracing-guerilla-history-and-moving-beyond-scott-walkers-wisconsin/

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant and Author, *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee* Project, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013-2016.

History of Deportation and Immigrant Rights Movements Project, Dr. Rachel I. Buff, 2012.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Associate Lecturer, Comparative Ethnic Studies 101: Africans, Europeans & Indian Nations in the Making of American Cultures, Fall 2015

Teaching Assistant, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee:

- Comparative Ethnic Studies 101: Africans, Europeans & Indian Nations in the Making of American Cultures, Dr. Rachel Buff, Fall 2016
- The Crisis of the American City as Viewed Through HBO's "The Wire": Dr. Marc Levine, Spring 2013
- United States History from 1877 to the Present: Dr. J. David Hoeveler, Spring 2008; Dr. Joe Austin (online), Fall 2012; Dr. Greg Carter (online), Spring 2017
- Family and Sex Roles in the Past: Dr. Nan Kim, Spring 2012
- The First World War: Dr. Winson Chu, Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2010; Dr. Gary Shellman, Fall 2011
- The Second World War: Dr. Winson Chu, Spring 2011
- Western Great Lakes American Indian History and Life: Dr. Cary Miller, Spring 2009

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"To Defuse a 'Powder Keg': Historicizing the 2016 Milwaukee Uprising," Roundtable, Labor and Working Class History Association Conference, University of Washington, June 23, 2017.

"Graduate School Experiences in Large-Scale Urban History Projects," Roundtable, Urban History Association Conference, Loyola University, Chicago, October 14, 2016.

"Claiming Historic Walker's Point," Presentation in "Historicizing the Channels and Landscapes of Power and Struggle in the Neoliberal City" Roundtable, Joint Conference of the Labor and Working Class History Association and the Working Class Studies Association, Georgetown University, May 30, 2015. Also panel organizer.

"Imagining a 'Real' Milwaukee: Germanness and Racializing the Pabst Brewery," Paper Presentation, UWM History Graduate Conference, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, February 15, 2014.

"'Opportunities for Defiance': Embracing Guerilla History and Moving Beyond Scott Walker's Wisconsin," Roundtable, Labor and Working Class History Association Conference, Graduate Center for Worker Education, New York, June 6, 2013; reprised at the Left Forum, Pace University, New York, June 8, 2013.

"Solidarity and Fragmentation," Midwest Labor and Working Class History Conference, Conference Organizer and Keynote Panel Chair, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, February 15-16, 2013.

"Suds and Leisure: The Development of Beer Gardens in Industrializing Milwaukee, 1840-1900," Paper Presentation, Joint Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians and the National Council on Public History, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 22, 2012.

"Power and Struggle: The Wisconsin Uprising and Beyond," Midwest Labor and Working Class History Conference, Conference Organizer, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, February 17-18, 2012.

"Worker Identity Expression at Milwaukee's Beer Gardens, 1880-1896." Paper Presentation, Midwest Labor and Working Class History Colloquium**,** University of Iowa, April 16, 2011.

"The Development and Engagement of Amusement Parks in Milwaukee, 1896-1910." Poster Session, History of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area Conference, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, October 24, 2009.

"Prohibition's Barrier to the Rights of Citizenship in Milwaukee." Paper Presentation, First Annual Graduate Student History Conference, University of Illinois at Chicago, April 19, 2008.

GUEST LECTURES

"Pabst: A Giant Among Giants," Invited Lecture, Signature Series Event of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Alumni Association, Lubar School of Business Chapter, Best Place at the Historic Pabst Brewery, June 1, 2017.

"What's in a Name?: Columbus, Columbia, and American Nationalism," Invited Lecture, Greenfield Public Library, July 6, 2016.

"Why Beer, Why Here?" Invited Panel Discussion with Fred Gettelman, Jim Draeger, and John C. Eastberg for "Brew City MKE" Exhibition, Milwaukee County Historical Society, February 18, 2016.

"Songs of Struggle: Cultural Expressions of Oppression and Empowerment in Regards to Race." Invited Panel Discussion with John Terry, Melissa Seifert, Rosemary Walzer, and Dr. Douglas McConnell for "Inclusion and Diversity Symposium," University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc, February 4, 2013.

"The Cultural Formation and Musical Structure of Blues Music," Invited Lecture, History of the Blues, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, September 28, 2011; repeated February 15, 2012.

"Local History Research Methods." Invited Panel Discussion, Immigrant America Since 1880, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, March 31, 2009.

"Entry of the United States in the First World War: Social and Political Issues." Invited Lecture, History of the First World War, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, November 6, 2008.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Theodore Saloutos Award for excellence in American immigration and agricultural history, UW-Milwaukee, 2014

Frederick I. Olson Scholarship for most academically qualified student in financial need, UW-Milwaukee, 2015-2016

PROFESIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Organization of American Historians
Labor and Working Class History Association
Urban History Association
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PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Graduate Assistant and Committee Member, Graduate Dean Search and Screening Committee, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, April-October 2013.
- Graduate Student Representative, Graduate School Scholastic Appeals Committee, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, April 2015-present.
- Board Member, Graduate Student Advisory Council, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, October 2013 - May 2014
- Organizer, "Riverwest: An Exploration of Milwaukee's Tavern Culture," Graduate Student Social and Bus/Walking Tour, Joint Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians and the National Council on Public History, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 20, 2012.
- Executive Board Member, Alliance of History Graduate Students, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2008-2009, 2013-present.
- Judge, National History Day, Milwaukee, WI, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2015.