Schenk's-Atwood Neighborhood: A Walking Tour

A Madison Heritage Publication

Schenk's-Atwood Neighborhood: A Walking Tour

Written by Joseph Hermolin
Edited by Katherine Rankin

1987

Funded by the City of Madison, the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, the Madison Gas and Electric Foundation, Oscar Mayer Foods Corp., First Realty, Inc. and Dane County Title Co.

Published by the Madison Landmarks Commission and the Atwood Community Center.

The author wishes to acknowledge Renate Bromberg for assistance with photography and preparation of the text. Ann Waidelich assisted in the preparation of the text and Mixed Media in the layout of this booklet. Unless otherwise stated, all old photographs are courtesy of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Cover: **The Schenk family at their storefront and home, built in 1893 at Schenk's Corners.** *Photo courtesy of Bob Huegel.*

Schenk's-Atwood Neighborhood: General History

Before the arrival of white settlers the Madison area was occupied by native peoples. Between 500 and 1000 A.D. Indians of the Effigy Mound Tradition built over 1,000 mounds in the Madison area. Of the few mounds that remain, three are in the Schenk's-Atwood neighborhood along Lakeland Avenue. By the time the fur traders came to the Midwest the Winnebago were firmly in control of central Wisconsin. Winnebago and Williamson Streets are laid out along old Winnebago trails. In 1832, Chief Black Hawk, while retreating from the Illinois militia, lead his group of Sauk Indians along the north shore of Lake Monona, following Winnebago trails.

When Madison was selected as the territorial capitol in 1836, the area had no white settlers, but, by 1848, when Wisconsin became a state, the community had a population of just over 600. In 1856, when Madison became a full-fledged city, it had a population of just under 7,000. During these years a major figure in Madison's development was Simeon Mills. His country home (at 2709 Sommers Ave.) looks almost the same as it did when it was built in 1863.

During the Civil War, the area known as Union Corners (East Washington Ave. and Milwaukee St.) was a way station on the road from Milwaukee to Madison. The Union House Tavern at Union Corners was a favorite drinking place for soldiers on leave from Camp Randall. In the same years small farms were established in the Milwaukee St. area. Families grew produce which they

The Union House Tavern at Union Corners about 1900.

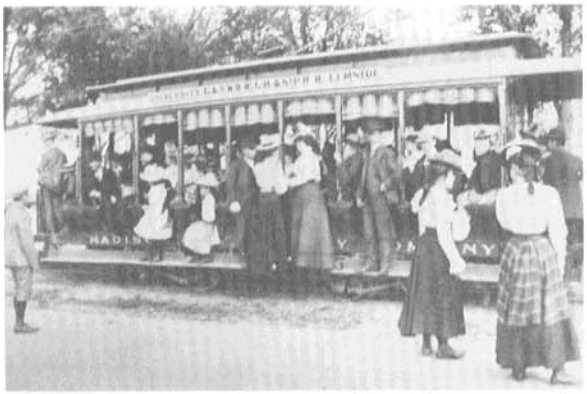
sold in Madison. Three of these "market garden" farmhouses still stand.

Much of the area around Lake Monona was initially developed for recreational purposes. In the 19th century Madison promoted itself as a resort area. Several tourist homes were built on the shores of Lake Monona. One, which still remains, was located on Lakeland Avenue. Other sites along the lakeshore near Elmside Blvd. were developed as single family summer cottages. In addition, private groups acquired land to develop as parks for day-long outings. Schuetzen Park was one of the larger and more popular spots. People often arrived at the park by steamboats that departed from docks in downtown Madison.

Schuetzen Park on Lake Monona at the foot of Dunning St.

A concerted effort to develop the Schenk's-Atwood area for housing began toward the end of the 19th century. The Madison Lakes Improvement Co. aggressively marketed Elmside, between Atwood Avenue and the lake, as a planned suburb of Madison in 1891. A major contributing factor to urban growth east of the Yahara River was the installation of electric streetcar lines to Elmside in 1892. Developers contributed financially to bring the streetcar line to Elmside, making it the first suburb to have public transportation. This meant that people no longer had to live close to their employment. Suburban development and the location of streetcar lines also allowed for the growth of regional shopping and business areas. Schenk's Corners and the Fair Oaks/Atwood intersection developed as focal points of local business.

At this time many influential Madisonians opposed industrial growth. They preferred to emphasize the city's cultural and academic assets and to use Madison's scenic beauty to promote the



Boarding the electric streetcars that ran to Elmside.

tourist trade. Attempts to attract industry to the city were occasionally successful but such activities were usually treated with considerable skepticism. This conflict in philosophy affected Madison's land use pattern. The west side developed as a residential area for university faculty and professionals, while the east side became an industrial and middle-income residential area. This created an east-west dichotomy that is still talked about today.

In 1902, local efforts to attract industry to the east side resulted in the newly formed Mason-Kipp Manufacturing Co. moving from Illinois to Madison. The company soon became known as the Madison-Kipp Corporation, one of the largest privately held firms in the Madison area even to this day.

Attempts to draw industry to Madison also resulted in the establishment of the United States

Hess Barrel Co., a family cooperage that operated until the 1950s at Second and Main Streets.

Sugar Company and the relocation of the French Battery Company (later renamed Ray-O-Vac) into the neighborhood. Other industries, large and small, followed suit.

Residential development grew to accommodate newly arrived workers and their families. The subdivisions of Hudson Park and Elmside were originally part of the Town of Blooming Grove. In 1906 parts of these suburbs incorporated into the new Village of Fair Oaks which extended from Division St. to Starkweather Creek. During its existence the Village brought about many improvements in streets and sidewalks. But in 1913, due to dwindling municipal coffers, the residents voted to be annexed to the City of Madison.

Development continued in the years just after World War I. Schenk's Corners was well situated during this time of rapid expansion, located as it was along public transportation lines, amid new housing and close enough to the rural area to attract business from local farmers. Schenk's Corners grew from the site of a handful of family businesses into a thriving shopping and business community with two major financial institutions, groceries and pharmacies, clothing and hardware stores, a livery stable and a blacksmith, movie theaters and a bakery. The community had a strong organization, the East Side Businessmen's Association, that promoted the neighborhood and was active in civic affairs. It also had its own weekly newspaper, the *East Side News*. Local residents who recall those years remember the area as a cohesive, closely knit community, almost like a separate village with Schenk's Corners as its downtown.

Schenk family grocery store built in the late 1890s on Winnebago St., behind the original corner store. *Photo courtesy of Bob Huegel.*

During the Depression local residents exhibited great resourcefulness. Many unemployed and underemployed did part-time farm work or home repair, often for payment-in-kind. Local merchant Bob Huegel recalls extending credit to many regular customers (and being repaid when times improved). Neighborhood residents were also helped by the Roosevelt Administration and the various New Deal programs. By World War II the economic recovery was complete and wartime production saw increased employment at the local factories.

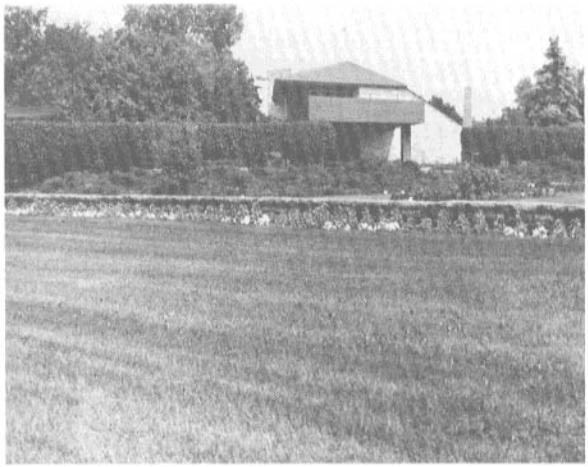
From 1900 to World War II this area was known as a German and Norwegian part of Madison. Residents were either European immigrants or children of immigrants. They often came to this area with the help of family members already here. Many families used their native language for religious services and in-family conversation and English outside the home. Local churches often conducted services in English and the native language of the congregation. Organizations such as the German Turnverein or Norwegian Sons of Norway helped preserve many ethnic traditions. By the 1940s ethnic identity was dissolving among the younger generation and World War II made associations with Germany unacceptable. Older members of the Norwegian community, however, expressed concern for occupied Norway. Members of the Trinity Lutheran Church Ladies Aid Society sent food and clothes to Norway in 1944, an act honored by a personal visit by King Olaf years later.

After World War II the development of shopping malls and the growth of chain stores caused the steady decline of the neighborhood's once lively shopping district. This decline was accelerated by the construction of the Atwood Ave. bypass in the 1970s. Today gradual turnover in the population has led to a diversification in ethnic origins, age and occupations.

Nevertheless, the area continues to maintain the atmosphere of a distinct neighborhood. Community organizations have helped in a revival of interest in local businesses. Since 1982 the area has seen the redesign and renovation of buildings near Schenk's Corners, the establishment of the traffic island at Schenk's Corners, the expansion of Madison-Kipp, a new housing complex on Atwood Avenue and renovation of the Eastwood Theater.

Olbrich Gardens

3330 Atwood Ave.



John C. Olbrich donated funds for the purchase of Olbrich Park as a memorial to his brother, Michael, a prominent Madison attorney and civic leader who died in 1929. Most of Madison's early park lands were purchased or donated by civic-minded citizens such as Olbrich. Although Olbrich Park was designed in the 1930s, construction did not begin until 1951 with the dredging of the marshy area adjacent to Starkweather Creek. Trees, shrubs and floral displays were planted in 1952 and 1953. A greenhouse was built in 1955. The John M. Olin Memorial Fountain was added in 1966 to honor the founder of Madison's parks system. The garden center, designed by Madison architect Stuart Gallaher, was constructed in 1976.

Today, the twelve acres of grounds surrounding the central building include herb, rose, dahlia, rock, prairie and wild flower gardens. The Olin fountain serves as a focal point for summer band concerts and weddings. Plans are currently underway for a major new building project, including a large domed conservatory and expansion of the gardens.

United States Sugar Company

Sugar Ave.

Built in 1905-1906 this large cream brick building housed the United States Sugar Company factory. High tariffs at the turn-of-the-century made foreign cane sugar so expensive that it became profitable to produce sugar from beets. The Company's first president was Magnus Swenson, the University of Wisconsin researcher who had become a multi-millionaire from his sugar processing and other inventions. In its heyday, the United States Sugar Co. factory, one of nine in the state, employed 350 men, working around the clock, from October to January. In one year, the factory processed 24,000 rail carloads of beets, supplied by farmers within a 100 mile radius, into 15 million pounds of sugar.

The factory's fortunes fluctuated widely depending upon the availability of cheap foreign cane sugar. Finally, in 1924, the business went bankrupt and closed its doors. The building was sold in 1929 to the Garver Feed and Supply Co., which has occupied the building ever since.

Lowell Elementary School

401 Maple Avenue

Built in 1916 on the site of former circus grounds, this school originally had eight classrooms as well as domestic science and manual arts rooms and a gymnasium/auditorium. Known at first as the New Irving School, its name was changed to James Russell Lowell School at the request of area residents.

In 1926 the school was expanded to meet ever increasing enrollment. The two new wings added 11 classrooms and several special purpose rooms. During the 1930s the school featured a nutrition room, a tuberculosis solarium, a full-time nurse and a dental clinic. Lowell School was Madison's first school to have a P.T.A., and also the first to participate in the federal hot lunch program.

The Schlitz Hotel

2922-2926 Atwood Avenue

This building was constructed in 1904 as the Schlitz Hotel. From 1916 to 1925, Thomas Bewick ran it as the Fair Oaks Hotel. A livery was connected to the hotel where people parked their horses and cutters when they went to church at nearby St. Bernard's. The hotel also featured a billiard hall and ice cream parlor that became popular meeting places for local residents.

Later the building served briefly as a hardware store and a Krogers grocery. In 1930 it became Weinschel's department store, a well-known local landmark operated by Adolph and Janet Weinschel until 1968. In 1973 the building was converted into an electrical appliance store.

St. Bernard's Church

2450 Atwood Avenue

St. Bernard's congregation was established in 1907. Services were first held in Father Fisher's house on Milwaukee St. and then at the Fair Oaks village hall. The first combination church and school building, a simple boxy structure, was erected in 1908-1909. The current edifice, designed by noted local architect, John J. Flad, was erected in 1927. When the new church was built, it was the largest Catholic church in the city. It is significant architecturally as an imposing example of the Gothic revival style, constructed of Madison's beautiful golden-colored sandstone. The front facade of the church is dominated by a large square tower that is a visual landmark in the neighborhood. Most of the windows are the original stained and painted glass designed by the German artist, Kurt Drewes. The addition of windows of an abstract design as well as interior changes were carried out in 1968. The social and religious functions at St. Bernard's have been a significant part of the lives of many east side families.

Hudson Hotel-East Side Businessmen's Clubhouse

2425 Atwood Avenue

This two-story, red brick building was erected in 1917 and is relatively unaltered on its exterior except for a small greenhouse addition built in 1981. It was originally known as the Hudson Hotel, named after J. W. Hudson, who was responsible for a great deal of local real estate development. Many of the hotel's residents were men, newly arrived in Madison, who came to work at Madison-Kipp during World War I.

In 1925 the building became home to the East Side Businessmen's Association and the East Side Women's Club. The two organizations were credited with promoting community spirit on Madison's east side. They sponsored business festivals, neighborhood beautification projects and developed playgrounds at local schools.

In 1954 the building was purchased by the United Community Chest and converted into a Youth Activities Center. Today it is the Atwood Community Center and its activities have expanded to serve area residents of all ages with a variety of educational, recreational and social programs.

Martin Loftsgordon Building

2332-2334 Atwood Avenue

Security State Bank in the 1920s. *Photo courtesy of Marine Banks.*

This two-story orange brick building was constructed in 1913 on the site of the Loftsgordon lumber yard. It was built in part to house the Security State Bank, established in 1912 by Martin and Henry Loftsgordon. Their lumber yard was relocated across Ohio St. (where St. Bernard's parish buildings are now located). The bank occupied the Loftsgordon building until 1923, when it moved to Schenk's Corners. After the bank vacated its quarters, Martin Loftsgordon opened his mortgage loan, real estate and insurance offices in the space. He and his wife, Matie, lived upstairs.

Much of the growth of the east side in the 1910s and 1920s was linked with the Loftsgordons, either through their lumber yard, their banking interests or their real estate and insurance concerns.

Philo and Sophia Dunning House

2212-2216 St. Paul Avenue

The original (right-hand) section of this structure was built by Philo and Sophia Dunning around 1849. It was built in the Greek Revival style and may be the oldest extant house in Madison. The building has since been added onto several times.

After farming and operating a saw mill Dunning established himself as a druggist and grocer in 1855. He also served as Treasurer of Dane County and State Representative for the Madison district. He and his family lived here for 20 years, but moved into downtown Madison when the railroad built its tracks across their front yard.

Fair Oaks Village Hall

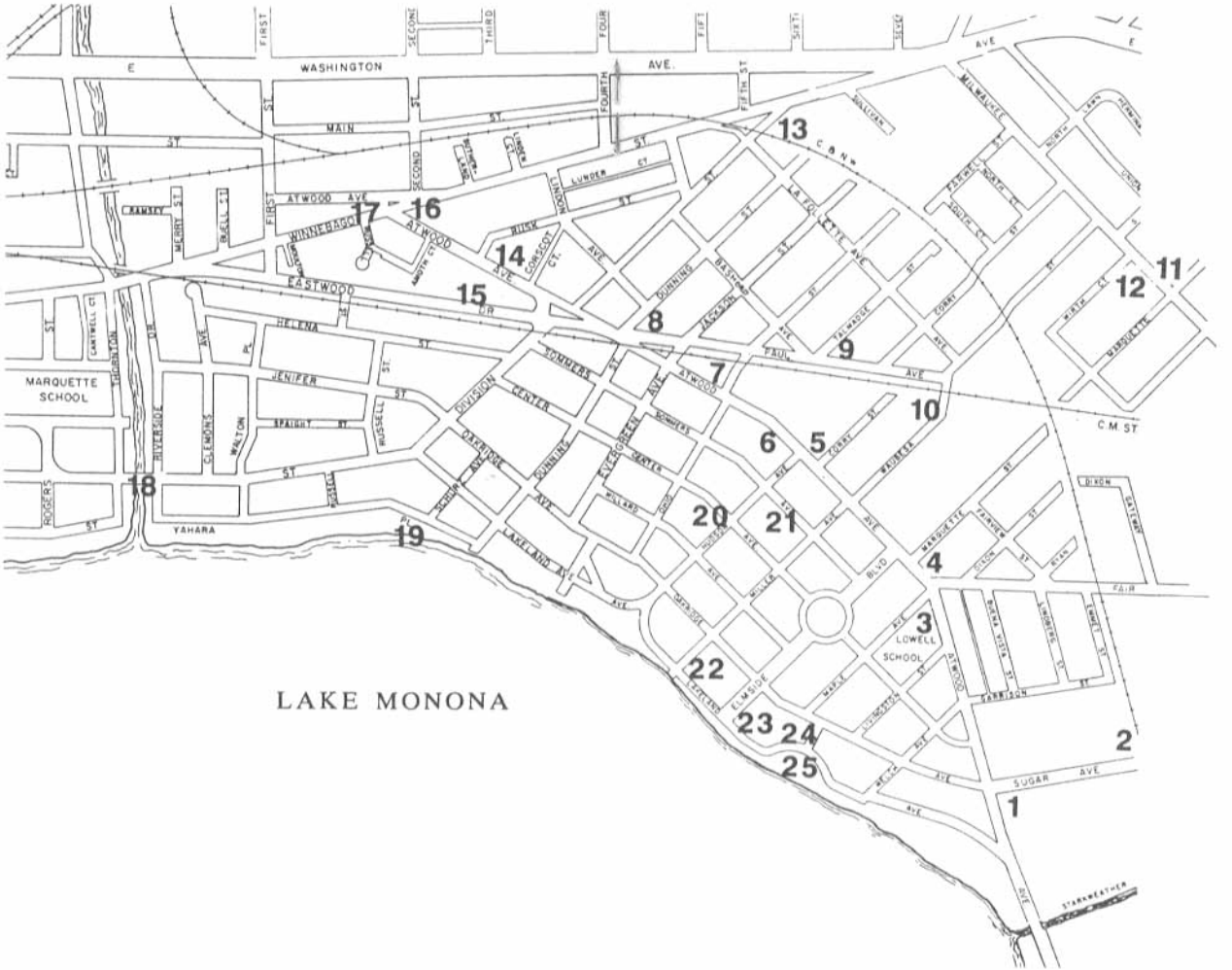
175 Talmadge Street

The Village of Fair Oaks was incorporated in 1906. Its approximate boundaries, starting at the northeast corner, were Milwaukee Street, Starkweather Creek, the Lake Monona shoreline, Elmside Boulevard, Atwood Avenue and Division Street. In the years before incorporation the area had acquired an unwanted reputation for rowdyism because Town of Blooming Grove officials were not interested in regulating saloons. Incorporation gave the new village the power to oversee the issuance of liquor licenses. On March 31, 1908 the new Village Hall was dedicated. The first floor housed a meeting room, a small jail and the fire department. St. Bernard's parish met on the second floor before building its first church in 1909. Initially the Village undertook many improvements, but as it grew, the need for more improvements outstripped the Village's ability to pay. The short-lived Village was annexed to the City of Madison in 1913. The Village Hall later became an annex to the old Hawthorne School (which stood at 220 Division St.) before being converted into apartments.

Madison-Kipp Corporation

201 Waubesa Street

In 1902 two fledgling lubricator companies, one from Madison and one from Rochelle, Illinois, merged to become the Mason-Kipp Co. In 1903 the firm moved to brand-new quarters on Waubesa St. and began production of mechanical devices to lubricate large engines. In 1904 the Coleman family purchased the plant, and it remains in their hands to this day. The company's capabilities expanded greatly during World War I and by 1918 the firm equipped two-thirds of all the steam and gas tractors in the United States. In the 1920s it began the production of zinc and aluminum die casting machines, and in the 1930s it developed a pneumatic grinder. Lubricators, die casters and grinders became the three major products of the firm, which saw its greatest production during the Second World War. There was a saying then: "If you live west of the Yahara River, you probably have never heard of Madison-Kipp; and if you live east of the river, you probably work there." Today the company employs 600 people, many of them long-term employees who form a loyal and close-knit group. The large plant at 2824 Atwood Ave. was built as the Four Lakes Ordinance Company during World War I and was purchased by Madison-Kipp in 1937.



1 Olbrich Park
2 United States Sugar Company
3 Lowell Elementary School
4 Schlitz Hotel
5 St. Bernard's Church
6 Hudson Hotel - East Side Businessmen's Club
7 Martin Loftsgordon Building
8 Philo and Sophia Dunning House
9 Fair Oaks Town Hall
10 Madison-Kipp Corporation
11 John and Catherine Sachs House
12 Stang-Wirth House
13 French Battery and Carbon Company
14 Eastwood Theater
15 Hoffman-Kennedy Dairy Horse Barn
16 Schenk's Corners
17 Security State Bank
18 Yahara River Parkway
19 Yahara Place Park
20 Herman and Amanda Loftsgordon House
21 "Mills Folly" - the Simeon and Marie Mills House
22 Elmwood Resort and Dining Hall
23 James and Minnie Corry Carriage House
24 "Rudder Grange" - the Riley House
25 Effigy Mounds

John and Catherine Sachs House

2838 Milwaukee Street

Built in the late 1860s by John and Catherine Sachs, this house was constructed of red bricks from a neighboring brickyard. The Sachses were productive market gardeners, farming nine acres of land. In 1870, they had one horse, a cow, three sheep and three swine and raised 300 pounds of hops. They sold $1,000 in produce annually. After her husband's death around 1883, Catherine Sachs continued gardening, and delivered produce to Madison in a horse-drawn cart. She raised six children and sponsored the emigration of many family members from Bavaria. This house and three others represent Madison's only remaining examples of the dozen or so market gardener's houses that existed in the late 19th century on Madison's fringes.

Stang-Wirth House

2817 Milwaukee Street

This house was originally built between 1861 and 1873 by Frederick Stang, a Bavarian immigrant, and his family. The Stangs, like their neighbors the Sachses, earned their living as market gardeners.

In 1883, the family of Jacob Wirth, a German immigrant and laborer, bought the house and significantly enlarged it using bricks from the Gerstenbrei brick yard which was located at the west corner of East Washington Avenue and North Street.

The home has maintained most of its historical integrity and original charm. The four segmentally arched windows, the small leaded glass window, and the decorative porch with spindled posts and a spindled frieze add grace and character to this simple Victorian farmhouse.

French Battery and Carbon Company

2317 Winnebago Street

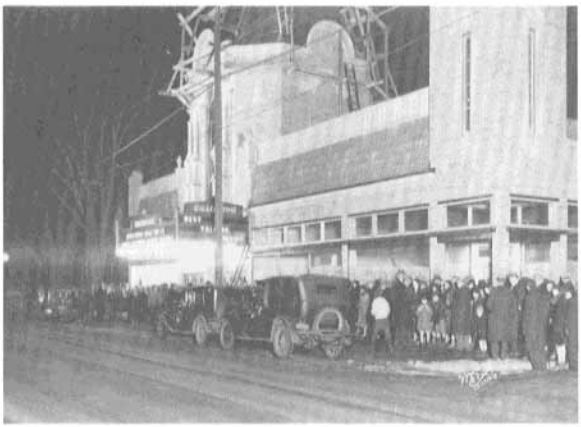
Ray-O-Vac factory as it appeared in the 1930s. *Photo courtesy of Ray-O-Vac.*

The French Battery Company was founded in 1906. Named in honor of the Frenchman who developed its first battery, the firm operated briefly in Chicago before moving to Madison. With the technical advice and direction of Prof. C. F. Burgess of the UW's Chemical Engineering Department, the company produced all types of batteries, including telephone, ignition, flashlight and radio batteries. The company built this one-story plant in 1916 and added two floors in the same style in 1920. In 1917 Prof. Burgess started his own competing battery company, which has evolved into today's Research Products Corp.

In the mid 1930s the French Battery Company changed its name to "Ray-O-Vac", after the trade name of its batteries. The company was proud of its leadership in the field of employee benefits: in 1925 it started a comprehensive employee insurance program and in 1941 it introduced a pension plan. It encouraged its supervisors to engage in civic activities and sponsored many social and athletic events, including a ukulele club. During World War II Ray-O-Vac employed over 4,000 people around the world. Today its home offices are still located in Madison and the firm employs about 800 people here.

The Eastwood Theater

2090 Atwood Avenue



Opening of the Eastwood Theater (some scaffolding has not yet been removed). *Photo courtesy of Jerry Fladen.*

The Eastwood Theater, now known as the Barrymore, was designed by local architect H. C. Alford and Peoria theater designer F. C. Klein. The exterior is Moorish in its inspiration. The original interior decor was meant to create the illusion of a Spanish hacienda courtyard. The *Capital Times* (Dec. 28, 1929) described the Eastwood as ". . .unique in Madison in its atmospheric effects. The illusion is of an open sky with stars that twinkle convincingly and soft, fleecy clouds floating along." The twinkling stars are all that is left of the once romantic interior design.

The Eastwood and its four adjoining shops were built by a group of east side businessmen under the direction of the East Side Businessmen's Association. It was the first theater in Madison built exclusively to show the new "talkies" motion pictures and was the only major theater built outside of the downtown area until the 1960s.

Hoffman-Kennedy Dairy Horse Barn

2020 Eastwood Drive

The large painted brick horse barn behind the storefront at 2049 Atwood Avenue was recently renovated to house offices and studios for several local businesses.

The old barn was built around the year 1904 by Conrad Hoffman and was purchased by the Kennedy Dairy in 1925. The barn and the office building at 2049 Atwood Avenue, built in 1925-1926, served as the east side branch of Madison's largest dairy in the early 20th century. The dairy kept up to ten horses in the building to pull its milk wagons. The Kennedy dairy was sold to the Borden Company in 1928 and in the 1930s the dairy's horses were replaced with trucks.

The west side of the old horse barn has ten evenly spaced windows, marking the original horse stalls. The pulleys used to lift hay into the second story lofts are still visible on the gable ends. The building is one of only a handful left in Madison to remind us of the days of the horse and buggy.

Schenk's Corners

2002 Atwood Avenue

Street Cars on Atwood Ave. as it intersects with Winnebago St. circa 1910, now the site of Anchor Savings and Loan. *Photo Courtesy of Bob Huegel.*

In 1893 the Fred and Wilhelmine Schenk family moved to this area and established a home and one of the area's first businesses—a combination saloon and grocery store. In the following decades, the next generation expanded the family businesses in this block to include a livery, a dry goods shop and a hardware store. In the 1920s and 1930s the dry goods store grew into the east side's largest department store and a new, imposing building was erected for it in 1923. Evergreen Savings and Loan (originally known as the East Madison Savings, Building and Loan Assn.) began in 1928 as an office in the back of the hardware store, and eventually grew to take over most of the building. In 1986 Evergreen merged with Anchor Savings and Loan.

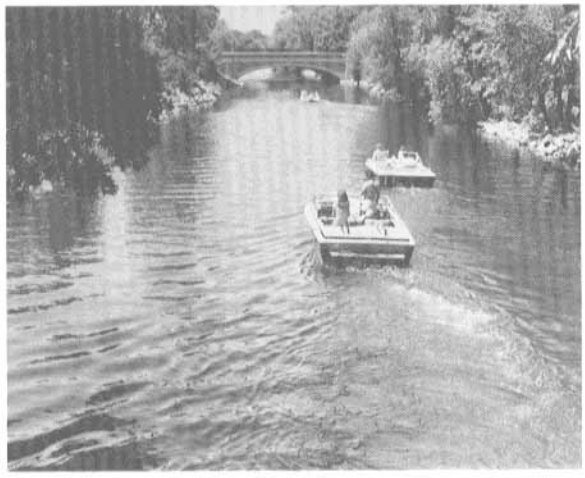
The growth of the Schenk family businesses between 1900 and 1935 was accompanied by the development of several others in what became known as Schenk's Corners—a thriving shopping area of family retail stores. The series of neoclassical orange brick two-story buildings from 1951 to 1969 Winnebago Street were part of this development. Built in 1911 they housed many different retail stores and offices over the years, including Fred Rennebohm's pharmacy (Oscar's brother), the Hall grocery and candy shop, and the Gem, a silent movie theater later known as the Palace. The coming of "talkies" and construction of the Eastwood Theater in 1929 signaled the end of the small nickelodeon style movie house.

Security State Bank

1965 Atwood Avenue

Security State Bank was founded by east siders in 1912 with a capital of $10,000. It was first located in the Loftsgordon Building at Atwood Avenue and Ohio Street. By 1923, when the bank moved to its present site, it had a capital of $50,000. The new building was designed by Frank Riley, an east side resident and a prominent Madison architect of the 1910s through 1940s. The Georgian revival style bank is a typical example of the high quality of Riley's designs. The four Greek Ionic columns on the majestic temple front are particularly distinctive. Major remodellings occurred in 1924, 1948, and 1964. When the bank building was erected it was heralded as "a great stride forward in East Side business and community development" (*Capital Times*, Dec. 31, 1923). The bank was purchased by the Marine Banks in 1970.

Yahara River Parkway



Before white settlement, the Yahara River between Lakes Mendota and Monona was a quiet stream meandering lazily through marshy ground. In 1849, the first dam was erected at the Lake Mendota outlet in order to power saw and flour mills and the river was straightened out for most of its length. The channel was essentially neglected for the rest of the 19th century by everyone except people looking for a place to dump garbage and dead animals.

In 1903 John M. Olin proposed a bold plan to widen and deepen the Yahara River, add locks in order to permit the passage of pleasure boats, and create a landscaped parkway along both sides. He also proposed to raise eight railroad bridges that were so low that a rower in a small boat had to duck to pass under them. Within six months, the energetic and dedicated Olin had secured guarantees that the railroads would raise the bridges, had acquired most of the land by private donation and had raised $5,000 more than was needed to accomplish the work. Within three years the old channel was turned into a beautiful and functional parkway. The development of the Yahara River Parkway was one of the early triumphs of Olin's Madison Parks and Pleasure Drive Association, which also developed Tenney, Brittingham and Vilas Parks, among others.

Yahara Place Park

Lake Monona at Schurz Avenue

The scenic Lake Monona shoreline from the Yahara River to Starkweather Creek has a long and colorful history. For hundreds of years, it was home to the effigy mound builders and later to the Winnebago Indians. During the Black Hawk War of 1832, Chief Black Hawk retreated along this shoreline while fleeing from the Illinois militia. Scattered families of Indians continued living near the lake even after white settlers had arrived in Madison.

In the late 19th century this area became a popular recreational spot. In 1871 members of the German community purchased 26 acres just east of the Yahara River, roughly between Division and Evergreen Streets, and developed it as Schuetzen (Shooting) Park. Originally a place for marksmanship contests, the park soon became an attraction for other family activities, including a beer garden, band concerts, picnics, bowling and billiards. Sunday outings were a beloved German tradition. The park included a large pier at what is now the foot of Dunning Street and many picnickers from downtown Madison journeyed to the park via excursion boat.

In 1903 the park was sold to Professor Kehl, a popular dancing instructor, who renamed it Lake Park, built a dance hall and brought in vaudeville acts. A short time later, Kehl sold the park and it was subdivided for much needed housing in the rapidly expanding east side. The Yahara Place Park just to the east of the old Schuetzen Park area was acquired for the city parks system in 1928.

Herman and Amanda Loftsgordon House

2429 Center Avenue

This comfortable, two-story stucco house is typical of many built in Madison in the early 20th century when the prairie style was popular. The house was built in 1918 by Herman and Amanda Loftsgordon. Herman was the first of five brothers from a Mount Horeb farm who settled in Madison. The Loftsgordon brothers became prominent east side businessmen and civic leaders. Herman was a banker and realtor and the leading force in the construction of the Eastwood (now Barrymore) Theater. His brothers and their mother all lived within a few blocks of each other. The family homestead was at 2701 Sommers Avenue and other brothers lived at 224 Ohio Street, 2421 Center Avenue and 2701 Center Avenue. Although families in the past tended to live closer together than they do today, the concentration of five family households within a few doors of each other is unusual.

"Mill's Folly" - the Simeon and Marie Mills House

2709 Sommers Avenue

In 1837, when Simeon Mills came to Madison, the only building in town was the Peck's log cabin. Mills built a combination store and post office of logs, thus beginning a long and varied career as a businessman and civic activist. Mills helped establish the first newspaper in Madison, was the first Justice of the Peace, was instrumental in the funding of the University of Wisconsin, was the last treasurer of the Wisconsin Territory, was Dane County's first State Senator, and served as president of an insurance company, a railroad and a bank. His frame house was located at West Main Street and Monona Avenue, but in 1863 he erected this gracious sandstone mansion on his 200 acre farm known as "Elmside."

Legend has it that Marie Mills disliked the new house. So, after four years, Simeon built a larger and even more elegant house downtown (on the site now occupied by the City-County Building). He sold his farmhouse to industrialist John W. Hudson, who later developed Hudson Park. In 1890 the Miller family from Philadelphia moved in. Their son, Samuel, was a nationally-known theater and opera promoter. Miller and local realtor James Corry later subdivided the farm as the Elmside plat. But the "Old Mills Place" remains, a proud reminder of Madison's early pioneers.

Elmwood Resort and Dining Hall

2806 and 2814 Lakeland Avenue

In the 19th century Madison was known as a summer vacation spot. Several resort hotels overlooked Lake Monona, including this one operated by the Devine family. The large house at 2814 Lakeland Avenue was built in 1899-1900, the home of Michael and Margaret Devine. Soon after moving in, Mrs. Devine began serving meals and taking in guests and the house became known as the Elmwood Dining Hall. The family operated a boat livery at the water's edge. A few years after the resort opened, the family built the house at 2806 Lakeland to serve as a separate dining hall. A large dining room in the front of the house seated up to 40 people and was also used for dances. On warm summer evenings, supper was served on the front porch, which extended around two sides of the house. On the lot between the two buildings guests played ball. Behind the two structures stood a barn and chicken house that supplied food for the dining room. Madison residents often journeyed by boat or streetcar to this peaceful spot to join the resort guests for dinner.

James and Minnie Corry Carriage House

2906 Lakeland Avenue

This quaint little house was built in 1911 by the Corry family as a carriage house. Local legend states that the stone for the structure came from the third Capitol building, which burned in 1904. The stone was reportedly brought across the frozen lake in the wintertime. James Corry was a well-known realtor who focused his activities on the east side. He developed the Fair Oaks plat and was a promoter of the U.S. Sugar Company. The carriage house was intended to accompany a large house to be built in front of it, but plans for the house were halted when Corry died unexpectedly at the age of 44. The carriage house was converted into a residence in 1946. It is one of only a handful of carriage houses remaining in Madison.

"Rudder Grange" - the Riley House

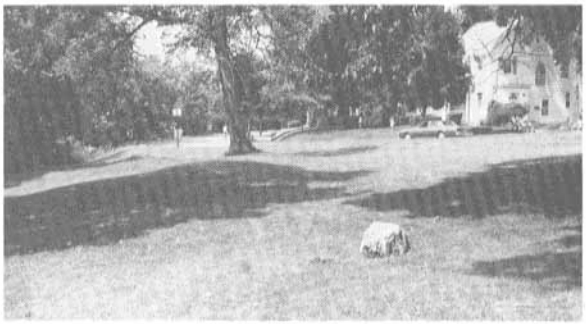
2930 Lakeland Avenue

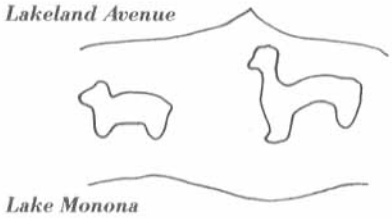
Built in 1908 in the colonial revival style, this large frame house has two fronts—one facing Oakridge Avenue and the other facing Lakeland Avenue. Both facades are basically symmetrical around central entrances. The Lakeland side is more formal, with sidelights, an elliptical fan light decorating the doorway and a gabled-roofed porch on Ionic columns. The Oakridge side features sidelights at the doorway, sheltered by a pent-roofed hood. A large semi-circular window lights the second story.

The house was designed for Edward and Eliza Riley by their son, Frank Riley. Edward Riley was a prominent local businessman who served as the president of the short-lived Village of Fair Oaks. Frank Riley studied architecture at MIT. His mastery of the colonial and Tudor revival styles was acquired in three prominent Boston architectural firms and also on a grand tour of Europe. In Madison, Riley developed a successful practice and designed, among other buildings, the Madison Club, the Maple Bluff Country Club, Madison East High School, First Church of Christ, Scientist and the Security State Bank. Frank Riley lived in this house from 1918 until his death in 1949.

Effigy Mounds

Lakefront Park, Lakeland and Maple Avenues, Hudson Park, Lakeland Ave. and Hudson St.





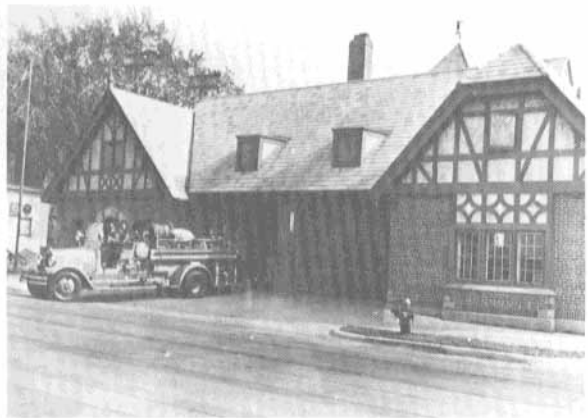
Schematic of Lakefront Park mounds

Effigy mounds represent the most visible and dramatic remains of the Woodland period of Wisconsin's prehistory. Wisconsin has, by far, the highest concentration of effigy mounds in the country and Dane County has the highest concentration of such mounds in the state. At the time of white settlement over 1,000 mounds existed in the Madison area. Of the 62 mounds that once existed along the Lake Monona shoreline between Olbrich Gardens and the Square, only three remain.

The two in Lakefront Park represent a bear and a lynx. A conical and a linear mound that once existed nearby have disappeared. The lone lizard mound in Hudson Park was once accompanied by two other lizards, 12 birds, five linears, and 10 conical mounds.

The Indians who built these mounds lived here between 500 and 1,000 A.D. in seasonal villages. They grew crops, hunted game and smoked tobacco. The sites of the effigy mounds appear to have been ceremonial grounds, sometimes used for burials, but their real significance remains a mystery.

Royal Theater, a silent movie theater that stood on Atwood Avenue near Division Street.



Fire Station No. 5 at Atwood Ave. and Division St., demolished in 1973 for construction of the Atwood Ave. bypass. *Photo courtesy of the Madison Fire Dept.*