

Edison Neighborhood Historic Reconnaissance Survey



Sponsored by:

City of Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Office
Kalamazoo, MI

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Lansing, MI

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Table of Contents

Edison Neighborhood Historic Reconnaissance Survey.....	1
SECTION I	8
Acknowledgements/Funding Credit.....	8
Introduction	9
Executive Summary	10
Purpose and Goals.....	10
Summary of Recommendations.....	11
Credentials.....	12
Project Overview.....	14
Project Objectives & Goals.....	14
Field Survey Methodology and Work Plan	15
Verbal description of survey area boundaries.....	16
Sources.....	16
Data Location	17
SECTION II.....	18
Descriptive Overview.....	18
Historical Contexts.....	21
Kalamazoo – A Brief Historic Overview.....	21
Thematic Narratives.....	27
Community Planning and Development.....	27
Early Development in Kalamazoo	27
Development Patterns and Trends in Edison.....	28
Charles Hays and Edison’s Residential Boom.....	32
Linden Park Subdivision.....	36
Mid-Twentieth Century Neighborhood Development.....	37
Late-Twentieth Century and Present-Day Neighborhood Development.....	39
Architecture.....	41
Commercial, Civic, Industrial, and Religious.....	41
Art Deco.....	42
Modern / Contemporary.....	44
Tudor Revival	45

Spanish Revival	46
Residential.....	46
Greek Revival	47
Italianate.....	48
Folk	49
The Victorian Period.....	50
Colonial Revival	51
Dutch Colonial Revival.....	52
Tudor Revival	53
Prairie.....	54
Craftsman.....	55
Minimal Traditional.....	56
Ranch	58
Industry	59
Paper Mills	59
Buggies, Railway Carts, and Automobile Production	62
Masonic and Fraternal Regalia	65
Stoves.....	66
Music Instruments.....	67
Current industry	68
Agriculture	70
Celery	70
Flower Bedding and Vegetable Industry	75
Social History.....	80
Fraternal Orders and Societies.....	80
Libraries	81
Farmer's Markets	83
Ethnic Heritage	83
Eastern European Settlement	84
Hispanic Population.....	87
African American Population	88
Entertainment/Recreation	91

Horse Racing and Fairs	91
Theaters	93
Parks.....	94
Commerce	98
Education	103
Primary and Secondary Education.....	103
Transportation	107
Religion.....	109
Survey Findings.....	114
Preservation Issues and Threats	114
Inappropriate modifications	114
Deferred maintenance and demolition	115
Recognition	115
Local Historic Districts and Preservation Planning	116
Overview of Survey Recommendations	116
Recommendations for Intensive-Level Study.....	117
Potential National Register-Eligible Districts.....	117
Mill Street Commercial District.....	118
Description:.....	118
Resource Count:.....	118
Significance:	118
Boundary Rationale:	118
Washington Square Commercial District	119
Description:.....	119
Resource Count:.....	119
Significance:	119
Boundary Rationale:	119
South Burdick Commercial District.....	120
Description:.....	120
Resource Count:.....	120
Significance:	120
Boundary Rationale:	120

South Portage Commercial District	121
Description:	121
Resource Count:	121
Significance:	121
Boundary Rationale:	121
Ihling Everard Residential District	122
Description:	122
Resource Count:	122
Significance:	122
Boundary Rationale:	122
Van Zee Residential District	122
Description:	123
Resource Count:	123
Significance:	123
Boundary Rationale:	123
Linden Park District	124
Description:	124
Resources Count:	124
Significance:	124
Boundary Rationale:	124
Hays Park / South Park District	124
Description:	125
Resource Count:	125
Significance:	125
Boundary Rationale:	125
South Edison District	125
Description:	125
Significance:	126
Boundary Rationale:	126
Sites with Individual Significance	126
1415-1416 Fulford Street	127
2025 Factory Street	127

1014 Mills Street.....	127
2315 Miller Road	127
1500 Lamont Ave	128
1323 Lane Boulevard.....	128
1833 South Burdick Street.....	128
1301-1319 Portage Street.....	128
936 Lake Street	129
803 Mills Street.....	129
610 Mills Street.....	130
1204 Bank Street.....	130
2020 Fulford Street	130
1018 Walter Street	131
642 Portage Street.....	131
760 E Vine Street	131
1030 Portage Street	132
1825 State Street	132
710 Collins Street.....	132
1244 Portage Street	132
635 Second Street	133
1104 Portage Street.....	133
536 E Michigan Ave	133
845 Gibson Street.....	133
1009 E Stockbridge Ave	133
835 Reed Ave.....	133
841 Reed Ave.....	134
2129 Portage Street.....	134
1121 Miller Road	134
1501 Fulford Street	134
1249 Portage Street (Portage Street Fire Station - Already Listed on the National Register).....	135
311 E Alcott St (Illinois Envelope Co. Building - Already Listed on the National Register).....	135
251 Mills Street (State Historic Marker)	135

Conclusion.....	135
Bibliography.....	137
SECTION III.....	143
Appendix A: Maps	143
Appendix B: Credentials	143
Appendix C: District Inventory Forms and Indexed Properties List	143
Appendix D: Chart of Properties Under 40.....	143
Appendix E: Inventory Forms.....	143

SECTION I

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Introduction

This is a reconnaissance-level historic survey that took place over the course of several months from February of 2021 through June of 2022. The work comprised three general categories: archival research; reconnaissance-level field work in the Edison neighborhood, conducted primarily in March and April of 2021; and the preparation of this survey report. Kraemer Design Group (KDG) worked in conjunction with the City of Kalamazoo and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to conduct this survey.



Fig. 0 Edison neighborhood aerial image, 1953, Portage District Library

Executive Summary

In 2020 the City of Kalamazoo received a Certified Local Government grant with federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Michigan Strategic Fund, State Historic Preservation Office in order to complete a reconnaissance level survey in Kalamazoo's Edison neighborhood. This survey encompassed 3,036 properties spread out across approximately 764 hectares (1,888 acres). The Edison neighborhood is Kalamazoo's largest neighborhood by population, and it sits southeast of the central downtown core.

This survey report presents a summary of the findings discovered during the survey and includes a description of the survey area, an overview of the project methodology, a summary of relevant historic contexts, property types, recommendations for future study, maps of the neighborhood and a complete list of the properties surveyed.

Purpose and Goals

The primary purpose of this survey is to research and document the Edison neighborhood to gain a better understanding of the historic areas of significance, preservation threats and opportunities, and to provide recommendations to the City of Kalamazoo. This survey also seeks to identify historic resources in the Edison neighborhood that are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a district. The data from the survey, the survey forms, and the recommendations contained in this report will be a planning and preservation resource for the City of Kalamazoo, the State Historic Preservation Office, and interested community groups.

The survey of the Edison neighborhood is part of the larger Inventory Kalamazoo 2022 project, which is a reconnaissance level survey currently being conducted by the City of Kalamazoo to document the entire city. The Inventory Kalamazoo 2022 project is a volunteer-based survey that seeks to photograph and document the existing condition of man-made resources (houses, schools, stores, gas stations, parks) in the City. During the Inventory Kalamazoo 2022 project every resource of any age within the City will be documented from the public right of way. Garages and outbuildings will be documented only if they are visible from the public right of way. The City Assessor's office estimates there are approximately 24,000 resources in the built environment of Kalamazoo.

Kalamazoo has an extensive history of assessing and surveying their built environment. There have been 15 historic surveys in the last 45 years, however, the last reconnaissance level survey took place from 1999 to 2001. This current reconnaissance level survey will build upon these prior surveys while focusing on the Edison neighborhood specifically, which has not yet been surveyed as a whole.

Summary of Recommendations

The Edison neighborhood is a highly intact area consisting of primarily residential houses as well as significant industrial areas and commercial thoroughfares. The key preservation issues and threats identified for the neighborhood include inappropriate modifications, deferred maintenance and demolition, lack of awareness and recognition, and a lack of preservation planning or local historic districts in the neighborhood. Further elaboration on the issues and threats identified are elaborated in the section below titled “Preservation Issues and Threats.”

This reconnaissance level survey identified nine potential National Register eligible districts as well as 31 sites potentially eligible for individual listing in the National Register. There are two sites in the Edison neighborhood that are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is recommended that further intensive-level survey be conducted in these areas. For more information on the proposed districts and individually eligible properties see the section titled “Recommendations for Intensive Level Study.”

The potential National Register eligible districts are as follows:

Mills Street Commercial
Washington Square Commercial
South Portage Commercial
South Burdick Commercial
Ihling Everard Residential
Van Zee Residential
Hays Park/South Park
South Edison
Linden Park

Properties in the Edison neighborhood already listed on the National Register:

1249 Portage Street
311 E Alcott Street

The potential individually eligible National Register properties are as follows:

1415-1416 Fulford Street
2025 Factory Street
1014 Mills Street
2315 Miller Road
1500 Lamont Ave
1323 Lane Boulevard
1833 South Burdick Street
1301-1319 Portage Street
930 Lake Street
803 Mills Street
610 Mills Street
1204 Bank Street
2020 Fulford Street
1018 Walter Street
642 Portage Street
760 E Vine Street
1030 Portage Street
1825 State Street
710 Collins Street
1244 Portage Street
635 Second Street
1104 Portage Street
536 E Michigan Ave
845 Gibson Street
1009 E Stockbridge Ave
835 Reed Ave
841 Reed Ave
2129 Portage Street
1121 Miller Road
1501 Fulford Street
1041 King Highway

Credentials

Kraemer Design Group LLC (KDG) was the contract partner selected to carry out this reconnaissance level survey. Headquartered in Detroit, Michigan, Kraemer Design Group is a full service architectural and historic preservation consulting firm. The survey team from Kraemer Design Group was headed up by Cassandra Talley and Lillian Candela with additional support from Kyle Berryman, Blake Drouillard, Morgan McCoy, Sara Smith, Theresa Riviera Clark, Sydney Daly, Alissa Pillion, and Roger Van Tol. Brian Rebain was the Principal-in-Charge of the project.

Lillian Candela and Cassandra Talley both meet the requirements outlined in 36 CFR Part 61 to qualify as architectural historians. Lillian meets this standard by virtue of a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania and Cassandra meets this standard by virtue of a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from Eastern Michigan University. Cassandra has three years of experience in the historic preservation field and Lillian has four years of experience in the historic preservation and architecture fields.

Additional team members include the following KDG staff whose educational backgrounds are provided as well. Blake Drouillard has a Bachelor and Master of Architecture from Norwich University, Kyle Berryman has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from Western Michigan University, Morgan McCoy has a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Western Michigan University, Theresa Riviera Clark has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design from Wayne State University, Sara Smith has a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Harding University, Alissa Pillion has a Bachelor of Architectural Science from Ryerson University and a Master of Architecture from Lawrence Technological University, Roger Van Tol has a Master of Architecture from University of Detroit Mercy, and Sydney Daly has Bachelor of Applied Arts in Interior Design from Central Michigan University. All work conducted and all work produced by staff not meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards has been supervised and edited by Lillian Candela and Cassandra Talley.

Brian Rebain is the Principal in Charge of the project. Brian has over 23 years of experience in the architectural and historic preservation fields, served as Chairperson of the State Historic Preservation Review Board and on the City of Detroit's Tactical Preservation Working Group, and is a thought leader in the field of adaptive reuse and innovative historic preservation methods. Please see Appendix B for the resumes/credentials of the project team members.

Project Overview

In 2020, the City of Kalamazoo was awarded a Certified Local Government grant to complete a reconnaissance level historic resource survey to document all the above-ground historic resources in the Edison neighborhood that are over 40 years old. Fieldwork began in the late spring of 2021 with the report finished in spring of 2022. There were public outreach sessions in April 2021 and June 2022 in order to discuss the survey with residents, to solicit their input, and to present the results of the survey. The primary objective in conducting this survey is to document and identify historic resources, potential historic districts, and to formulate recommendations for future preservation and planning efforts. In conjunction with the Edison neighborhood survey being conducted by Kraemer Design Group, the City of Kalamazoo is concurrently conducting a volunteer-based survey of the rest of the city in 2021 and 2022.

This reconnaissance level survey builds upon prior surveys that have been conducted by the City and contract partners in the past. These surveys were important documents that were consulted early and often by the KDG team as they provided contextual information and laid a good groundwork for the 2021 survey of the Edison neighborhood. Prior surveys include:

- Kalamazoo Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey (2001)
- Walking Through Time: A Pictorial Guide to Historic Kalamazoo (1997)
- City of Kalamazoo – Historical and Architectural Intensive Level Survey (1997)
- Kalamazoo Historic Inventory, Historic Site Inventory Phase IV (1986)
- The Kalamazoo Historic Inventory, Phase II (1980)
- The Kalamazoo Visual Survey, Historic Site Inventory Phase I (1978)

Project Objectives & Goals

The objective of this survey was to identify above-ground historic resources that warrant further investigation or merit inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; to assist Kalamazoo city officials in carrying out their planning and preservation duties; and to help highlight the valuable historic resources in the neighborhood. The survey will allow the community, elected officials, and city staff to make informed policy decisions which will enhance city planning decisions. This will, in turn, improve the livability and place-making efforts in Kalamazoo.

This historic survey will be a vital tool in considering which resources warrant potential future local and/or national designation. Historic surveys also help stimulate interest in the historic places and spaces that make a community unique. This augmented community awareness—and because community partners are invaluable in the quest to make a city more inclusive, adaptable, and viable—will aid residents and city officials in taking the necessary actions for building upon and expanding the preservation and reuse already occurring in Kalamazoo. Historic surveys can also help expedite environmental review processes, which alleviate burdens on city and state planning and preservation staff.

Field Survey Methodology and Work Plan

This survey was conducted in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in the updated 2018 *Michigan Above Ground Survey Manual*. The forms were completed with the key terms listed in the Survey Manual and the structure of this report was based upon the Survey Report Components given in the Survey manual although the order of some components has been adjusted slightly. The National Park Service's Bulletin 24 *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* was also consulted for guidance.

Additionally, the project team worked in conjunction with the City of Kalamazoo to adhere to their survey methodologies to provide a seamless survey product that would work with their overarching Inventory Kalamazoo 2022 effort, which is currently underway. Accordingly, the project team utilized the Survey123 application on their cell phones and ArcGIS software for the mapping components. All photos were taken from public right-of-way by car or on foot, as needed. All properties within the survey boundaries were photographed, with all buildings 40 years of age or older inventoried and evaluated for eligibility using the National Park Service's *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* and recorded on SHPO Architectural Inventory forms. All buildings less than 40 years old are briefly documented on the spreadsheet in Appendix D.

The Kraemer Design Group field survey team consisted of four KDG team members, two per car. Both teams primarily surveyed by car although some high traffic areas and some residential areas were surveyed on foot. Using smartphones, the survey teams verified the address, entered the address into the Survey123 smartphone application, and then photographed the building with the camera feature inside the Survey123 application. Most buildings had at least three photographs taken; however, some had more if the property was large and some properties had less due to traffic, visibility issues, or concerns from the occupants of the building. After the field data was collected, the qualified architectural historians, Lillian and Cassandra, reviewed and analyzed the data using the city Geographic Information System (GIS) and aerial photographs along with Google Maps and Street View in conjunction with the survey photography. Cassandra and Lillian reviewed and analyzed the architectural style, date of construction, roof shape and materials, window types and materials, siding materials, overall condition, outbuildings, and historic integrity. This analysis was used to identify cohesive groupings of historic resources and significant individual resources, which informed the decision on where to recommend historic districts.

The fieldwork data including the photographs and all the information collected for the survey inventory forms was combined with archival research to ensure that significant resources were not overlooked. This reconnaissance survey evaluated all resources including residential, commercial, civic, religious, and industrial properties. The recommendations given here are based on the National Register of Historic Places eligibility criteria. Based upon the results of this survey and upon the accumulated data compiled in this survey report the project team has

identified individual resources and potential historic districts that warrant further research—an intensive historic survey of these areas is recommended and is discussed further in the “Recommendations” section of this report.

A public engagement meeting was conducted in April of 2021 to ensure the public was both aware of the survey and had the opportunity to participate in and contribute to the survey. This meeting acted as an introductory meeting to acquaint the public with the survey team participants and overall project goals. The project team solicited information from the public at this meeting and provided additional context regarding the objectives and goals survey. Residents of the Edison neighborhood provided important feedback about particular properties, local history, and areas of potential resources to be considered by the project team; one resident provided historic photographs of the paper mills in Edison.

Verbal description of survey area boundaries

The Edison neighborhood is a large neighborhood located in the southeast corner of the City of Kalamazoo. A full narrative boundary description is found, below:

Starting at the northwest corner of the survey area, the boundary begins at the corner of S. Burdick Street and E. Walnut Street and runs east on E. Walnut Street until Portage Street. At Portage Street the boundary turns north on Portage Street and runs north along Portage Street until Gibson Street, turning east onto Gibson Street and running east on Gibson Street until turning northwest onto S. Pitcher Street and continuing northwest until turning east onto E. Michigan Avenue. The boundary continues east on E. Michigan Avenue until E. Michigan Avenue hits the Kalamazoo River. At the Kalamazoo River, the boundary turns southeast and runs along the western edge of the Kalamazoo River, following its contours, until the boundary hits the eastern boundary of the City of Kalamazoo. The eastern edge of the survey boundary then follows the eastern boundary of the City until it hits Miller Road. At Miller Road the boundary of the survey area runs west on Miller Road until hitting Portage Street. At Portage Street the survey area boundary turns north and runs north on Portage Street until hitting E. Alcott Street. At E. Alcott Street the survey area boundary turns west and runs west on E. Alcott Street until it hits S. Burdick Street. At S. Burdick Street the survey area boundary turns north and runs north along S. Burdick Street until hitting the starting point of the boundary, the corner of S. Burdick and E. Walnut Street.

Sources

Local archival repositories including the Western Michigan Zhang Legacy Collections Center, Portage District Library, and the Kalamazoo Public Library were important sources of information. Additional sources consulted included historic maps, city directories, assessor’s records, newspapers and newspaper clippings files, articles, books, published histories, prior

surveys, National Register of Historic Places nominations, field investigation, historic photographs, and community member's input.

Data Location

This survey report and the survey inventory forms will be kept at the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office and with the City of Kalamazoo Community Planning and Development department. A copy of the survey will also be retained by Kraemer Design Group. All survey inventory forms, and all source materials will also be conveyed to the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office and the City of Kalamazoo.

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SECTION II

Descriptive Overview

Kalamazoo is located on the western side of the state of Michigan approximately fifty miles south of Grand Rapids. As of the 2010 census the population was numbered 74,262 persons within the city limits. Kalamazoo is located equidistant between Detroit and Chicago, approximately 150 miles from both. The city is located primarily on the southwest bank of the Kalamazoo River, which flows west and empties into Lake Michigan in Saugatuck, Michigan.

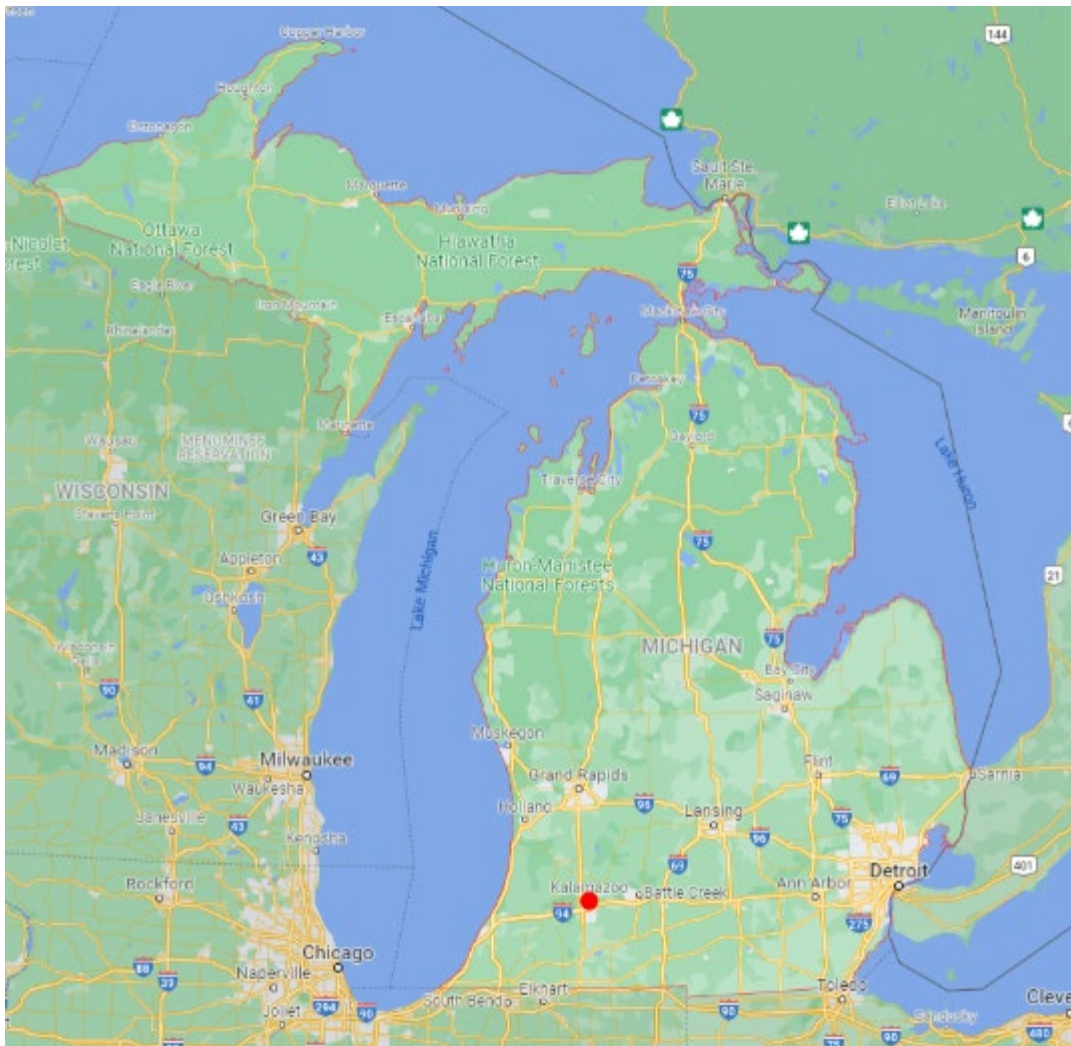


Figure 1: City of Kalamazoo location, Google Maps

The Edison neighborhood is located within the bounds of Kalamazoo at the city's southeast side. Edison is large, and the boundaries roughly span from Michigan Avenue on the north to Miller Street on the south with S. Burdick forming the primary boundary on the western edge and the Kalamazoo River, Amvet Memorial Parkway, and Olmstead Road forming the primary boundaries on the eastern edge. Dense commercial areas are found in the northern sections of the neighborhood while a golf course, a park, and a large baseball diamond are located near the Kalamazoo River in the northeast corner of the neighborhood. The east and southeast sections of the neighborhood are dominated by large industrial and manufacturing concerns like the Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers, the Flowserve Corporation, and Kalamazoo Metal Finishers. Near the northern edge of the neighborhood, the Arvco Container Corporation has a large campus located between S. Pitcher Street and King Highway. There are several smaller commercial areas on the south and west sides of the neighborhood: two commercial areas on Portage Street—Washington Square and an area further south on Portage—and a commercial area on S. Burdick. Mills Street runs north-south through the neighborhood while Miller Road runs east-west at the southern end of the neighborhood, and both of these streets have commercial areas at various intervals. Miller Street has some industrial complexes on the eastern side near the edge of the city limits.



Figure 2: Map of the Edison neighborhood (outline in green) and the City of Kalamazoo (outlined in red), KDG

The topography is mostly flat as this area was historically a low-lying fluvial terrace that flanked the banks of the Portage Creek, the Kalamazoo River, and the smaller streams in the area. The area around Kalamazoo is ringed with rolling hills, and the hills plus the Kalamazoo River have historically demarcated the boundaries of the town.¹ The Kalamazoo River demarcates the northeastern boundary of the Edison neighborhood. Portage Creek flows through the west side of the neighborhood before emptying into the Kalamazoo River near where E. Michigan Avenue joins with King Highway.

¹ Brendan Henahan and Robert O. Christensen, "Historic Resources of Kalamazoo, Michigan: Partial Inventory – Historic and Architectural Resources," (Kalamazoo Historical Commission: 1983) 3.

With approximately 9,000 residents, the Edison neighborhood is one of the largest and most diverse neighborhoods in Kalamazoo. The Edison neighborhood is primarily made up of residential properties, with approximately half of the houses being owner occupied.² Many dense residential neighborhoods are located in the center of the neighborhood with the eastern fringe (East of Fulford) primarily comprised of industrial properties. Overall, there are relatively few resources less than forty years of age, especially amongst the residential resources. A total of 106 properties out of approximately 3,100 properties surveyed during the fieldwork were determined to be less than 40 years of age. Some of these properties include: a newer apartment complex located near Portage and Miller Streets—called Apple Ridge Apartments—and The Marketplace housing development which is bounded by Bank Street, Marketplace Boulevard, and Collins Street.³⁴ The Apple Ridge Apartments are comprised of ranch style apartments built in 2005, while the Marketplace is an affordable housing development, built in 2011, and comprised of new, single-family homes. Similarly, The Creamery Apartments, which were just completed in 2021, are located at 1101 Portage Street and are also designated as affordable units. There are also several gas stations, businesses, and homes that were less than forty years of age.

There are areas of vacancy near the southwest corner of the neighborhood, primarily where the Bryant Paper Mill used to be located just south of Reed Avenue near Portage Creek. There are also open areas near the industrial companies on the east side of the neighborhood. There is also a large vacant parcel near the intersection of Bryant Avenue and Lane Boulevard. Another large, open area is located just east of the Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers, next to the Kalamazoo River.

Much of the Edison neighborhood is flat with some hilly terrain near the southern end of the neighborhood – south of Palmer Street. The houses south of Palmer are set back from the street and are less densely spaced with deeper front yards and rolling sloped yards. Several bodies of water run through the neighborhood including Portage Creek near the western edge of the neighborhood and the Kalamazoo River to the east. The area near Portage Creek in the south section of the neighborhood was historically used for growing celery as the plants thrived in the wet soils in this area.

The neighborhood grew from north to south,⁵ with turn-of-the-century era properties located in the northern and middle portions of the neighborhood while the southern portion of the neighborhood is a little later, with a fine collection of post-World War II minimal traditional style houses located toward the south end of the neighborhood near Miller. The middle section of

² Lynn Smith Houghton and Pamela O'Connor, *Kalamazoo Lost & Found* (Kalamazoo: Kalamazoo Historic Preservation Commission, 2001), 252.

³ Kiley Kievit, "Kalamazoo's 24-home The Marketplace development to debut in the 2011 Parade of Homes," *MLive*, https://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/2011/05/kalamazoos_24-home_the_marketp.html (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁴ The Marketplace, Kalamazoo Land Bank, <https://kalamazoolandbank.org/portfolio-items/marketplace/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁵ Sharon Ferraro, *Kalamazoo Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey*, Survey Report, 2001, 43.

the Edison neighborhood—from Lake Street to the north to Palmer Avenue to the south, and generally bounded by the Grand Elk Railroad tracks to the west and by the Grand Elk Railroad tracks/Fulford Street to the east—is almost entirely residential.

Kalamazoo and the Edison neighborhood specifically has a high concentration of intact historic housing. Nearly the entirety of the Edison neighborhood housing stock was found to be more than 50 years of age. Wood houses are the norm, but brick and stone are common too. Housing styles include, among others, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Folk National, Folk Victorian, Prairie, Craftsman, Tudor, and Minimal Traditional styles. Because the Edison neighborhood was located next to two important manufacturing hubs (the Bryant Paper Mill site and the factories on Fulford Avenue) the housing stock tended toward vernacular designs including Folk National and Folk Victorian types.

There are many standout architectural jewels in the neighborhood with 32 historic resources recommended as individually eligible, pending further intensive level research and evaluation of the interior of the buildings. The Kalamazoo Public Library—Washington Square branch is a Gothic Revival structure located on Portage Street just north of the Washington Square commercial district. With limestone accents, arched windows, and steeply pitched parapeted gables, the library is both a beautiful public asset and a noteworthy piece of architecture. The industrial building located at 1501 Fulford is the former Star Brass Works building and is an intact early nineteenth century factory building. The former Ihling Brothers building located at 2020 Fulford is an intact Art Deco influenced industrial building. The post office at 1121 Miller Road is a standout work of mid-century Modern architectural design.

Historical Contexts

The text below provides a brief historic overview of Kalamazoo and the Edison neighborhood and also discusses the important historic themes that distinguish Kalamazoo.

Kalamazoo – A Brief Historic Overview

The very first human settlers in the Kalamazoo area were Paleoindians who lived in this region from 10,000 BCE to 15,000 BCE. The Paleoindians are believed to be largely nomadic groups who hunted large game using stone tools. After the Paleoindians, a series of early, middle, and late Archaic era peoples lived in this area with the early Archaic peoples being, primarily, hunter-gather groups. Many cultural traditions from these Archaic peoples were continued and refined by the Native Americans who populated the area during the Woodlands period. This included mound building and trading goods with adjacent Native groups.

By the Woodlands era (1000 BCE to 1000 CE), the area that later became known as Kalamazoo was home to Native Americans of the Hopewell tradition. Native Americans of the Hopewell tradition are not members of a unified tribe, but rather, were associated by their trade routes

which stretched from Michigan down through northern Florida. The Hopewellian peoples probably settled the area sometime before the start of the Common Era. Evidence of their tenure on this land is apparent in the small earth mound still visible in Bronson Park in downtown Kalamazoo and various other earth mounds visible in Indiana and western Michigan. Populations of the Hopewell tradition had dispersed by the Late Woodlands era and, at the time European settlers began migrating into Kalamazoo, the Potawatomi Native Americans lived in the area.



Figure 3: Bronson Park Mound, 1869, Kalamazoo Public Library

Located in the southwest section of the State of Michigan, Kalamazoo is the county seat of Kalamazoo County. Itinerant French Canadian fur trappers camped in the area in the 1700s but the first permanent European settlement in Kalamazoo occurred when Titus Bronson built a hut in the area in 1829 (later upgrading to a log cabin in 1831).⁶ Originally known eponymously as Bronson, the settlement became known as

Kalamazoo in 1836 when Titus's "enemies... successfully carried out a plan to have the name of the town changed."⁷

The exact origins of the word "Kalamazoo" are in dispute, but most explanations attribute it to a Native American word. The precise source word (be it "kikanamaso" or "negikanamazo") has long been debated. At the very least, the Kalamazoo River was known as the *La Riviere Kikanamaso* by 1760 per Father Pierre Potier who was a Jesuit missionary who traveled from the area near Detroit to Fort Saint Joseph that same year and recorded the name.

From its founding in 1829, Kalamazoo grew to 2,507 residents by 1850 and grew further to 11,937 by 1880.⁸ Much of Michigan's and Kalamazoo's early growth was due to the completion of the Erie Canal, which occurred in 1825. The Erie Canal provided easier overland passage to many New Englanders who were eager to leave the crowded and infertile fields of the eastern states. Indeed, most early settlers in Kalamazoo were New Englanders or came from upstate New York. Due to this growth, Kalamazoo was incorporated as a village in 1838 and as a city in 1883.

⁶ Willis F. Dunbar and Richard H. Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1959), 33.

⁷ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 36.

⁸ Statistics for Michigan, Thirteenth Census of the United States, Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/41033935v15-21ch7.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2021), 569.



Figure 4: Washington Square, 1938, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro

Early settlers grew crops for profit and to support their livestock and families. Although the Edison neighborhood no longer contains intact rural farms, there was evidence gathered during the survey that several mid-1800s houses still exist in the neighborhood including Greek Revival residences at 1825 State Street and 841 Reed. In 1834, the federal government relocated the land office from nearby White Pigeon to Bronson, which greatly facilitated the growth of the small community.⁹

“The climax of the boom in land speculation was reached in 1836, when the local land office disposed of 1,634,511 acres, and had receipts

totaling \$2,043,866.87.”¹⁰ The surge of settlers moving into Kalamazoo to purchase land led to bars, hotels, and businesses quickly popping up to accommodate the crowds. Growth continued throughout the later decades of the nineteenth century.

By 1910 the population in Kalamazoo had grown to 39,437.¹¹ Like many Midwest industrial centers, Kalamazoo thrived in the early decades of the twentieth century. The 1920s saw the growth of the Edison neighborhood as older districts to the north became fully developed. Residents began purchasing houses and lots in the Edison neighborhood as men like noted Kalamazoo mayor and real estate developer Charles B. Hays began developing and subdividing property along Portage Street. The population in Kalamazoo hit 50,000 persons by 1920.¹²

The Great Depression hit Kalamazoo rather slowly as “unemployment was barely perceptible during the spring and summer months of 1930;” however, by November of 1932, the full weight of the financial crisis finally took effect as the number of individuals on relief or jobless reached 7,000.¹³ Streetcar operators and other municipal employees had their pay cut and the ensuing streetcar workers strike and ensuing violence contributed to the complete suspension of the street car system in 1932.¹⁴ Like much of the nation, Kalamazoo only fully recovered from the

⁹ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 41.

¹⁰ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 44.

¹¹ Statistics for Michigan, Thirteenth Census of the United States, Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census (1910): 569. <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/41033935v15-21ch7.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹² John Moody, *Moody's Analyses of Investments and Security Rating Service* (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 1925) https://books.google.com/books?id=S0kcAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1053&lpg=PA1053&dq=kalamazoo+population+1920&source=bl&ots=oA0oxVU7WP&sig=ACfU3U32fJlmURPxbyRYhe-BcANrt_LdWw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewifIIHhzoH0AhXckmoFHZ2LA3gQ6AF6BAgjEAM#v=onepage&q=kalamazoo%20population%201920&f=false (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹³ Louis Stolle, *Kalamazoo and the Great Depression, 1929-1932*, Kalamazoo College (1953): 4, 9. [stolle.pdf](http://kzoo.edu/stolle.pdf) (kzoo.edu) (Accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁴ Stolle, 10.

Depression with the U.S.'s involvement in World War II which spurred a period of great industrial activity.

When the United States entered World War II, prominent Kalamazoo manufacturers like Gibson, Kalamazoo Stove, Kalamazoo Railway Supply, and Checker Cab Company began manufacturing goods for the war. Gibson Guitar Corporation “contributed to the war effort by manufacturing electrical and mechanical radar assemblies” among other products while Edison-based Kalamazoo Stove Company converted 97% of its production capabilities to the manufacture of wartime goods.¹⁵ Checker Cab made truck cabs and trailers while Edison-based Kalamazoo Railway Supply (later renamed the Kalamazoo Manufacturing Company) made a personnel carrier for use on railways in the various war theaters.¹⁶ The building at 760 E Vine was the location of Ingersoll Steel and Disk, a division of Borg-Warner after Borg-Warner purchased U.S. Pressed Steel Products Company in 1937. This facility was the primary location for production of Landed Vehicle Tracked (LTV) for the United States Navy and Marine Corps in World War II. The vehicles were 'amphibious warfare vehicles' which could function on both land and sea and were primarily used in the South Pacific. In total “sixty five major manufacturing plants in Kalamazoo were engaged in essential war production and it was estimated that employment in war production was between 16,00 and 20,000.”¹⁷ Wartime “victory” gardens were planted all over the city and Kalamazooans also contributed by canning their own food and buying war bonds. During the 1940s there was a shortage of housing in Kalamazoo as new residents streamed in to take advantage of the demand for labor. Because of this, some houses were divided into apartment and temporary housing units being built across the city including in Hays Park in the Edison neighborhood. After the war many factories began expanding their facilities or production capacities to meet post-war demands including the Sutherland Paper Company, Checker Cab Company, and the Upjohn Company.

Kalamazoo as a whole continued to grow in the 1950s. “From 1950 to 1957 the population of the city of Kalamazoo increased almost 39%.”¹⁸ Photographs of the main Edison retail hub, Washington Square, show that the neighborhood possessed a thriving and varied business community including a bakery, a jeweler, a hardware store and a drug store, among others. The paper mills in Edison also prospered during this time with the Allied Paper Company building a \$12 million dollar pulp mill in Jackson, Alabama to help feed its operations in Kalamazoo.¹⁹

¹⁵ Kris Rzepczynski, “Kalamazoo Stove Company,” Kalamazoo Public Library (1998) <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/business/kalamazoo-stove-company/> (accessed November 11, 2021); Kris Rzepczynski, “Gibson, Inc.” Kalamazoo Public Library (1998) <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/business/gibson-inc/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁶ David Kohrman, “Checker Motors,” Kalamazoo Public Library (2012) <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/business/checker-motors/> (accessed November 11, 2021); “Kalamazoo Manufacturing Company Material Handling Equipment,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 1960.

¹⁷ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 195.

¹⁸ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 207.

¹⁹ “Allied Paper Adds Pulp Mill,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1964.

Non-white migration to Kalamazoo grew slowly until the 1950s and 1960s when the second wave of the Great Migration was reaching its peak and when the Bracero program was extended in 1951 with the signing of the Migrant Labor Agreement which allowed migrant laborers entrance into the United States.²⁰ The Bracero program was initially established in 1942 via an executive order called the Mexican Farm Labor Program. The program allowed Mexican men to work legally in the United States on short-term labor contracts addressing a nationwide agricultural shortage during World War II.

The booming post-WWII economy combined with a strong demand for products from the paper mills in the Edison neighborhood meant that newcomers put pressure on the housing stock in the city which was ill equipped to handle the influx. Because of this, many single-family homes were converted into multifamily apartments. However, the original appeal of the Edison neighborhood in the early 1900s—its proximity to the factories which supplied good paying jobs—was, by the 1950s and 1960s, a deterrent for new families looking to settle in the city. With houses mixed in so closely to industrial areas, Edison was considered less desirable than other locations.²¹ Because of this, those settling in Edison during this time period likely did so because they had few other housing options.

Additionally, the neighborhood suffered from aging housing stock and the legacy of redlining—see “Community Development” section, below, for more details on redlining—which likely compounded the problem. Articles from the 1960s in the Kalamazoo *Focus* newspaper, a prominent local African-American newspaper, provided details about how Black residents experienced discrimination as they sought housing in the city²² while a *Kalamazoo Gazette* article from 1968 reported that children in the Edison School (one of the main elementary schools that serves Edison and is now known as the Washington Writer’s Academy) “had a 50 percent turnover in its 616 students during the last school year” as new residents surged into the city.²³

By the 1950s rise of suburbanization, “new shopping centers such as Cork Lane Shopping Center further south on Portage and the Southland Mall began to cut into the [Washington] Square’s business.”²⁴ During the exodus to the suburbs the neighborhood began to change. Many of the vital businesses and services were moving out of the neighborhood as shopping habits began changing in the 1950s. This created a situation where many new residents who moved into the Edison neighborhood had less immediate access to necessities. With increased vacancy in the Washington Square area, “the final blow to the district’s image came in the 1970s when adult themed businesses began to move in.”²⁵ These new retail tenants worried residents in the area

²⁰ Kathy Jessup, “Kalamazoo has been both a boiling pot and a melting pot throughout its history,” *MLive*, December 26, 2010 https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/2010/12/kalamazoo_has_been_both_a_boil.html (accessed November 11, 2021)

²¹ Mary Marlett, “Southeast Side a Potential Problem Area,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 2, 1968.

²² “Northsiders Confer on Housing Needs,” *Kalamazoo Focus*, September 30, 1965.

²³ Mary Marlett, “Southeast Side a Potential Problem Area,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 2, 1968.

²⁴ Sharon Ferraro, Washington Square Draft National Register Nomination, 2005.

²⁵ Sharon Ferraro, Washington Square Draft National Register Nomination, 2005.

who feared crime in the neighborhood would increase. In 2006, an adult entertainment club in Washington Square that had long vexed neighborhood residents was finally demolished but redevelopment was slowed by the depressed economy after the 2008 recession. The work going on in the neighborhood resulted in gun violence dropping 41% in Edison by 2015.²⁶

As the City and local citizens began contemplating revitalizing the neighborhood, Washington Square was recognized as a key area which may have been the impetus for later developments in this commercial district. Long considered a neighborhood hub, the Washington Square area long housed vital businesses and services although the declines discussed above hampered efforts to rejuvenate the area. In 2003 a study was commissioned called The Portage Street Strategic Vision which was conducted to help guide the City in its revitalization efforts—the report also identified Washington Square a priority for revitalization because of the walkability of the neighborhood and the dense cluster of historic buildings.

Local Edison residents were a key driver in beginning a neighborhood transformation to tackle some of these problems. In 1968, the Edison Neighborhood Committee was formed with a goal to support students attending the Edison elementary school by providing food programs. From that initial goal, the mission grew, and today the Edison Neighborhood Association continues to advocate for residents by writing grants, running community programs including a tool share, partnering with local food banks to provide food assistance to residents, and organizing neighborhood cleanups and food drives. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the Edison Neighborhood Association was keenly focused on assisting residents with homeownership and revitalizing the existing housing stock.²⁷ Additionally, during the 1990s, organizations like the Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services and the Habitat for Humanity were actively working in the neighborhood to stabilize housing and to provide homeownership services.²⁸



Figure 5: Washington Square, 1957, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro

Today, the City of Kalamazoo is currently investing heavily in the Edison neighborhood, and private developers have begun work in the neighborhood as well. A new housing development called The Marketplace was built in 2011, and a new apartment complex called The Creamery was built along Portage Street in 2020. Both The Creamery and The Marketplace developments are focused on providing low-cost housing to area residents—the Marketplace homes were sold to qualifying families below cost. Washington Square and other commercial areas have seen a resurgence in recent years as

²⁶ Aaron Mueller, “Gun Violence Drops 41 percent in Edison,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 24, 2015.

²⁷ Laurie A. Cerny, “Edison is Neighbors Helping Neighbors,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 6, 1991.

²⁸ Laurie A. Cerny, “Edison = Togetherness,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, Nov. 14, 1993.

new businesses continue to move into vacant storefronts. Additionally, the Kalamazoo County Land Bank worked to ensure commercial buildings in Washington Square landed with owners who would provide much needed services in the area. During the survey fieldwork in 2021, the City was in the midst of a road and sidewalk improvement program along Portage Street that also includes installing new water mains.²⁹ A new Boys and Girls Club is planned for a vacant parcel on Portage Street which will provide facilities and programming for youth in the neighborhood.



Figure 6: 1301-1319 Portage Street, 1957, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro

The Edison neighborhood has a thriving Black and Latinx population, and many new entrepreneurs are launching businesses in the neighborhood's commercial corridors. A Black-owned winery opened at 1319 Washington in March of 2021, while south Portage Street is home to many Latinx-owned businesses.³⁰ More information about the thriving Black and Latino populations in Kalamazoo can be found in the "Ethnic History" section of this report.

Thematic Narratives

The thematic narratives outline brief descriptions of the identified contexts relevant to the Edison neighborhood. Each thematic narrative includes a list of representative historic resources associated with each thematic context.

Community Planning and Development

Early Development in Kalamazoo

Evolving modes of transportation and the platting of roadways shaped the development and settlement patterns in Kalamazoo. In the eighteenth century, Kalamazoo was accessed via the Kalamazoo River, which was used extensively by early fur-traders. By the mid-eighteenth century, modes of transportation were rapidly changing, and most accessed Kalamazoo via road rather than water. Territorial Road was marked out by commissioners in 1830, and it largely

²⁹ Al Jones, "Along Portage Street in Kalamazoo's Edison Neighborhood changes are on the way," *Second Wave Media*, October 14, 2021 <https://www.secondwavemedia.com/southwest-michigan/features/Along-Portage-Street-in-Kalamazoo-s-Edison-Neighborhood-changes-are-on-the-way-101421.aspx> (accessed November 11, 2021).

³⁰ Kyle Mitchell, "1st Black woman winemaker in Michigan opens Kzoo tasting room," *Woodtv.com*, March 16, 2021 <https://www.woodtv.com/news/kzoo-and-bc/states-1st-black-winemaker-opens-tasting-room-in-kalamazoo/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

followed existing Native American trails leading from Detroit to the mouth of the St. Joseph River. When first marked, the road passed through difficult terrain and was often impassable at points. By 1834, the road was improved to the point where stagecoaches could travel. This very road is what Titus Bronson traveled in 1829 to settle Prairie Ronde. It is from Prairie Ronde that Titus Bronson set out from to settle Kalamazoo.³¹

The other road early settlers used to reach Kalamazoo was the Chicago Road. Chicago Road also developed from an early Native American trail – the Saulk Trail. This road roughly follows the path of present-day I-94 and traverses the width of southern Michigan.³² With the development of more major thoroughfares leading to Kalamazoo and, later in 1846, the addition of the Michigan Central Railroad station in the city, Kalamazoo transitioned from a small hamlet to a fast-growing city. When Bronson settled Kalamazoo, then called Bronson, the town was platted with Kalamazoo Ave, Michigan Ave, and Portage Street as the three main thoroughfares.³³ The boundaries for the original plat were North Street, West Street (now Westnedge), South Street, and the river to the east. Development was concentrated near the current downtown area; although, with Portage Street running south, it was imminent that Kalamazoo would sprawl southward toward what is today the Edison neighborhood.

Development Patterns and Trends in Edison

An 1861 atlas of Kalamazoo County shows that most settlers lived north of Vine Street but for two small, platted areas in what is now the Edison neighborhood.³⁴ It was at this time that the National Driving Park was built in the present-day Edison neighborhood. Located on a large tract of land between modern day Portage, Stockbridge, Cameron, and Reed Streets, the National Driving Park was a horse racing track that was built in 1858 and which attracted visitors, vendors, and horseman to the area.³⁵ During these early years, when the Edison neighborhood was sparsely populated and minimally settled, there was frequent reason to visit the area because of the National Driving Park. By 1890, Kalamazoo had grown significantly, and the Edison neighborhood was largely developed down south to Washington Ave. Washington Ave. marked the northern edge of the National Driving Park, and there was little development further south.³⁶

³¹ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 33.

³² Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 55-56.

³³ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 41.

³⁴ Geil & Harley, 1861 Map of Kalamazoo County, WMU Zhang Archives.

³⁵ Alex Florist, "National Driving Park," Kalamazoo Library, accessed 2/2/22, <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/recreation/national-driving-park/>.

³⁶ William C. Sauer, *Illustrated Atlas of Kalamazoo County*, 1890, WMU Zhang Archives.



Figure 7: 1861 Map of Kalamazoo County, Geil & Harley Atlas



Figure 8: 1890 Illustrated Atlas of Kalamazoo County, William C. Sauer

Dates of plat maps reinforce the fact that the neighborhood developed from north to south. It also appears that the west side of Edison developed earlier than the east side – likely since the National Driving Park existed on the east side until the land was sold to Charles B. Hays at the turn of the century. Some of the earliest plat maps in the Edison neighborhood include Andrew Taylor's Addition (1859), Van Zee Addition (1884), and James A Taylor Addition (1890).

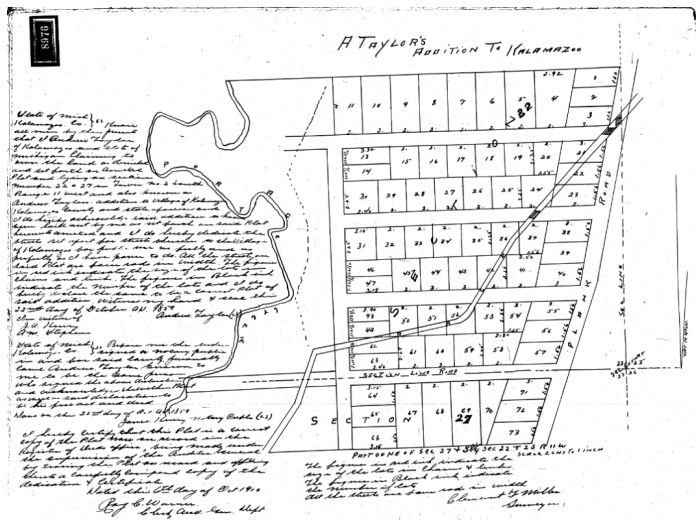


Figure 9: A. Taylor's Addition, 1859, State of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)

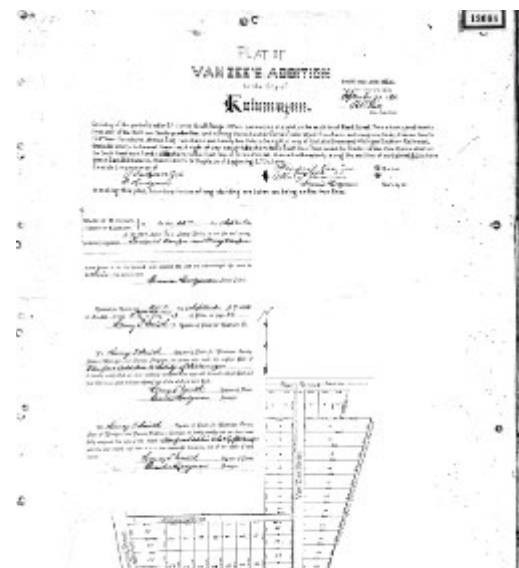


Figure 10: Van Zee's Addition, 1884, State of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)



The Edison neighborhood was not densely developed until the early 1900s with the involvement of developer Charles B. Hays. Through the nineteenth century the area which is now Edison was largely agricultural and recreational land with minimal dwellings. The few houses in the area sat on large plats of land in rural settings. A rise in industry such as celery growing and paper mills in the area, the closure of the National Driving Park, and the subdivision of land by developers such as Hays led to the dense, regular residential grid we see today.

The scale and style of the houses in the Edison neighborhood are relatively homogenous – the houses represent intact example of early twentieth century worker’s housing in vernacular Folk styles with several Victorian era styles including Shingle and Queen Anne along with Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Prairie styles, among others, seen

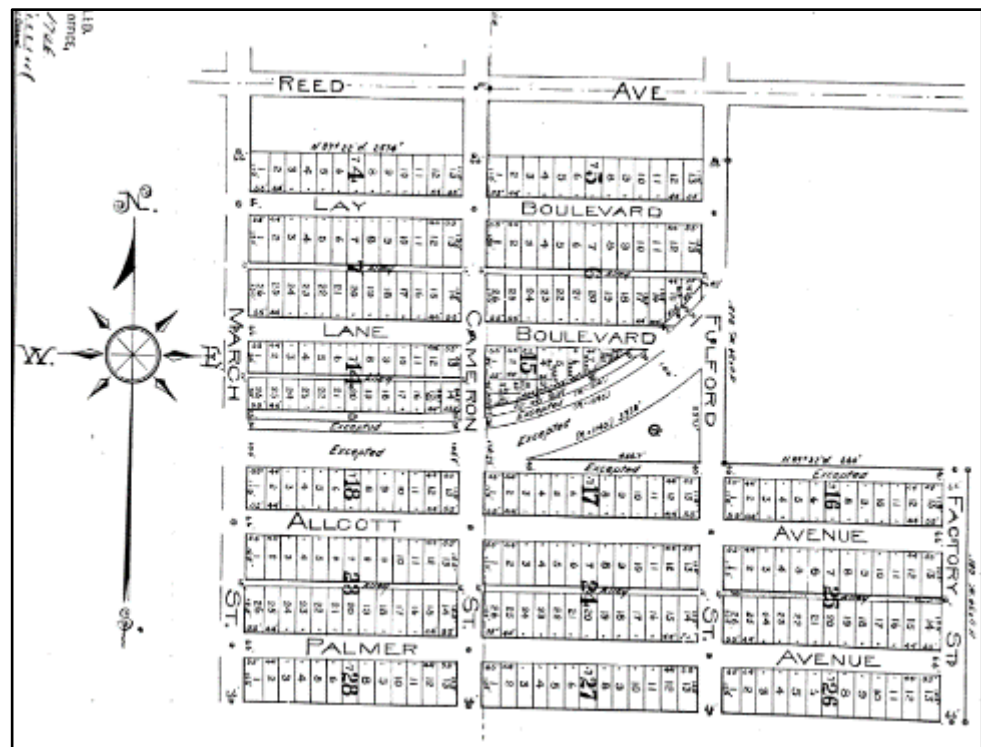


Figure 12: South Park Addition, 1906, State of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)

throughout. The majority of houses in Edison sit on rectangular lots and are quite densely packed. Many of the houses have auto garages, which are accessed via narrow alleys that run behind the houses. These alleys are original to the development of the neighborhood as the alleys are depicted on the plat map for the South Park Addition. The South Park Addition was developed by Charles Hays and platted in 1906.

There are a few notable site features which deviate from the regular grid in the neighborhood. It is of note that the “excepted” portion of the plat map above (Figure 12) was at the time used as a streetcar line. The last streetcar ran in 1932, and eventually this sweeping track became Bryant Street. Also of note are Egleston, Lay, and Lane Boulevards. These three streets are the widest streets in the neighborhood with large, landscaped boulevards down the middle of the streets. These boulevards are the result of the Parks and Boulevards Committee, which was formed by the Kalamazoo City Council in the early twentieth century. These boulevards are currently under the purview of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department. These boulevard landscape features run from Fulford Street on the east to Portage Street on the west and are all encompassed in the

proposed Hays Park/South Park historic district. On Egleston there is a plaque marking the location of a former Civil War training site—troops of the 25th Michigan Infantry of Civil War soldiers trained here in 1862 in preparation for the war.³⁷

Just as they are the grandest streets, these boulevard streets also have the grandest houses in the neighborhood. Egleston, Lay, and Lane tend to have larger, more high style houses than the surrounding streets, although a cursory review of city directories did not reveal a significant difference in the profession of those on these streets than those on other streets in Edison. Typical styles found on these boulevards include large Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, and Victorian Shingle style homes, among others.



Figure 13: Lane Boulevard, 1939, Kalamazoo Public Library



Figure 14: Lane Boulevard, April 2021, KDG

Charles Hays and Edison's Residential Boom

Prominent Kalamazoo homebuilder and developer Charles B. Hays not only developed and constructed many of the houses in the Edison neighborhood but also resided in the neighborhood. Born in Kalamazoo in 1862, he partnered with local grocer August B. Scheid to form his initial real estate ventures in 1887³⁸. Throughout their business relationship, Hays and Scheid financed the building of more than 1,500 houses, 3,000 jobs, and sold over 3,000 city

³⁷ Lauren Gray, "Tiny plat has big history," *Kalamazoo Gazette*, October 10, 2005.

³⁸ Ihling Bros. Everard, "Kalamazoo Illustrated," 1892, 48.

lots.³⁹ Additionally, Hays founded multiple development companies including the Kalamazoo Improvement Company, the Kalamazoo Land Company, and the South Side Improvement



Figure 75: Charles Hays and A.B. Schneid et. al, 1902 Kalamazoo Gazette article, Kalamazoo Public Library

Company. These companies were responsible for much of the residential development in the Edison neighborhood including those constructed in the Hays Park plat, the South Park plat, and the Linden Park neighborhood.



Figure 16: Charles Hays advertising display, 1939, Kalamazoo Public Library

These developments were constructed by Hays in the locations of the former National Driving Park and George Taylor's celery nursery, respectively. The early twentieth century transition from rural agricultural and recreational outskirts of downtown Kalamazoo to the dense residential neighborhood the area is today can largely be attributed to Hays. The 1909 *Picturesque Kalamazoo*

publication describes Hays as “Kalamazoo’s leading Real Estate man, who has built hundreds of the city’s prettiest homes and promoted some of its most successful enterprises.”⁴⁰

The demand for housing in this area can be attributed to the large amount of industry in the neighborhood concentrated along the railroad lines to the east of the neighborhood and in the center of the neighborhood along the Portage Creek in the location of former celery fields. The railroads were particularly conducive for industry as it allowed for easy transportation of goods, and the creek was essential in the paper mill production which occurred in that area. Historically, the railroad branched off near some of the industrial buildings to provide direct access to the loading docks of the buildings.

³⁹ Alex Florist, “Charles B. Hays: The Man Who Helped Build Kalamazoo,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2021

⁴⁰ E.E. LaBadie, *Picturesque Kalamazoo* (Kalamazoo, MI: Kalamazoo Publishing Company, 1909), 61.

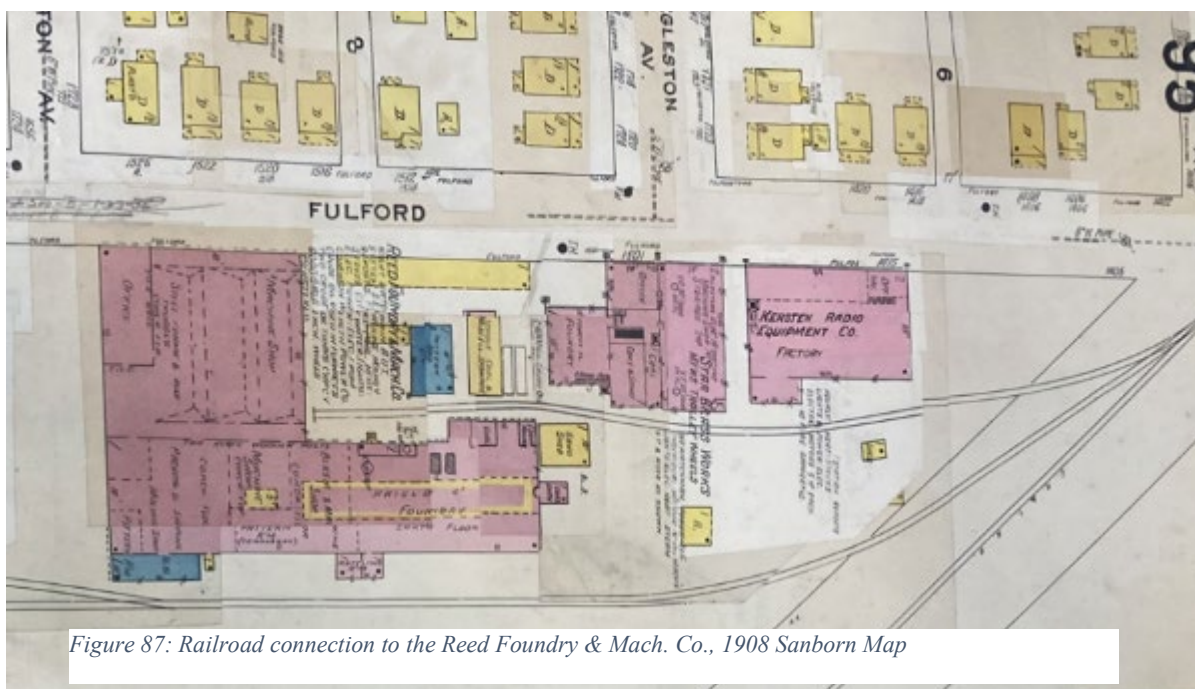


Figure 87: Railroad connection to the Reed Foundry & Mach. Co., 1908 Sanborn Map

The formation of these factories led to a surplus of jobs in the Edison neighborhood and likely inspired the massive demand for housing in this southeast area of the city. Many early Edison residents were employed by facilities including Superior Paper Company, Bryant Paper Company, Imperial Coating Company, the Illinois Envelope Company, Kalamazoo Railway Supply, Michigan Buggy Company, and many others. While many of these residents had working class jobs at the factories, the houses in Edison were built with fine materials and often have high style architectural detail.

Hays was dedicated to constructing high quality houses often detailed with decorative ornament for prices the working class could afford. An article within the monthly journal *Hays' Home Builder and Investor* proclaims that all of Hays' homes are finished in "a fine grade of oak, Egyptian trim...mahogany doors." The journal also boasts that "these beautiful and artistic homes are the visible expression of higher thought and endeavor along architectural lines in homes for the average-salaried man."⁴¹ The relative grandeur of the housing stock, in comparison to other working-class neighborhoods in the early twentieth century, can largely be attributed to Hays.

Multiple proposed historic districts – namely the Hays Park / South Park and Linden Park districts – are the brainchild of Hays. Not only are these swaths of Edison significant for their architecture but they are also significant for their association with the large development booms that occurred in Edison in the early 1900s as a part of Hays' homebuilding dynasty.

⁴¹ Charles B. Hays, *Hays' Home Builder and Investor*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (August 1910).



Figure 18: 1028 Lay Boulevard in *Hays Home Builder and Investor* (1910), Kalamazoo Public Library



Figure 99: 1028 Lay Boulevard, April 2021, KDG



Figure 20: 1627 Lane Boulevard in *Hays Home Builder and Investor* (1910), Kalamazoo Public Library



Figure 21: 1627 Lane Boulevard, April 2021, KDG



Figure 22: 715 E. Stockbridge, 1938, Kalamazoo Public Library



Figure 23: 715 E. Stockbridge, April 2021, KDG

Linden Park Subdivision

The Linden Park subdivision was developed by Charles Hays in the early 1920s. Located directly adjacent to the Bryant Paper Mill (of which Charles Hays was an instrumental early organizer), the Linden Park subdivision is comprised of approximately 68 houses (4 are deemed non-contributing) in a development roughly bounded by Reed to the north, Belford to the west, Vernon to the south, and Portage Street to the east.⁴²

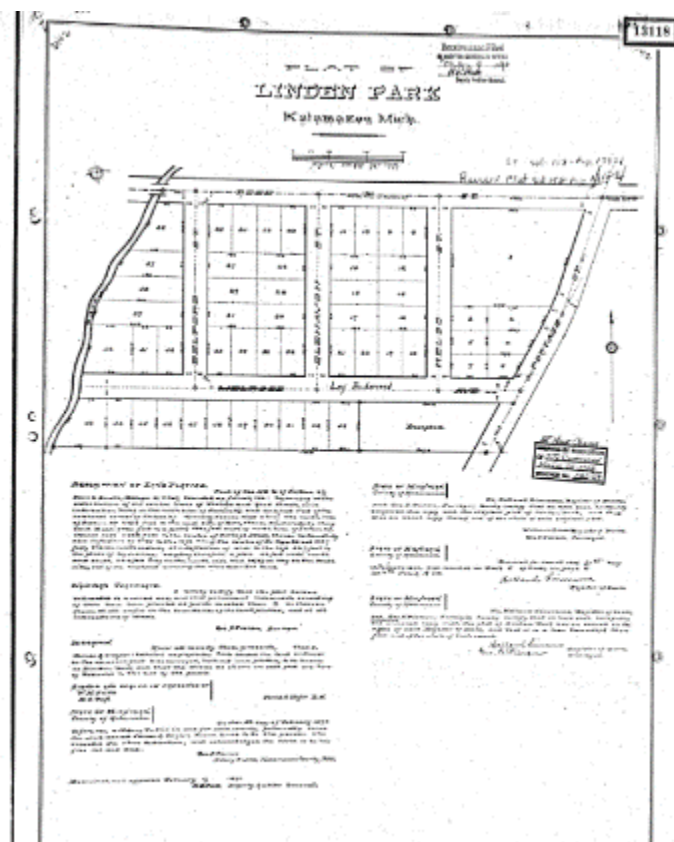


Figure 24: Linden Park plat map, 1890, State of Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)

The development of the Linden Park subdivision has a history that is partially tied to the political climate of the late 1910s and early 1920s. The United States went through a period of turmoil in 1918-1920 called the First Red Scare with a marked fear of communism displayed in newspapers and media coverage across the country. The red scare had its origins in the post-World War I atmosphere where an increased nationalism following the war combined with new immigration from southern and eastern Europe, the Russian Revolution, and organized labor activities. All combined to create an increased worry that foreign influences might propel some Americans toward socialism or communism. Kalamazoo did not escape the effects of this tumultuous period. Responding to this uncertainty, Charles Hays developed a novel idea that greater happiness via homeownership might thwart the issue. Utilizing his large

land holdings, Hays began subdividing the area directly east of the Bryant Paper Mill site. Profiling the proposal by Hays to build 200 new homes “for the workingman” a 1919 *Kalamazoo Saturday Night* article proclaimed, “There is no red flag flying above the house of the man who owns his own home.”⁴³

In 1921, Charles Hays’ Kalamazoo Land Company began construction for a groundbreaking new concept in housing developments. To help meet the desperate

⁴² Note: the original Charles Hays development in Linden Park was reported as containing 56 houses but the survey counted any house within the bounds of the district as contributing if it was of the same era as the Charles Hays built houses. This resulted in 64 contributing buildings in the Linden Park district and 4 non-contributing buildings.

⁴³ “A City of Homes is a City of Contentment; Stock in Kalamazoo’s New Housing Compsny [sic] Will Benefit Buyer and Breed Satisfaction,” *Kalamazoo Saturday Night*, December 6, 1919.

need for post war housing, the Company built fifty-six houses on four square blocks on a plat called Linden Park. The development offered homes for ten percent down, much less than the standard thirty percent most banks required. The goal was to make moderate cost homes available to working families and in order to make workers more satisfied as homeowners and less likely to “flock to the red banner” of socialism or unionism.⁴⁴

Linden Park is comprised of a series of repeating home designs made up of narrow bungalows, Tudor Revival style single-family homes and duplexes, Colonial Revivals, and simple front gabled Folk National style houses. The original fifty-six houses constructed in Linden Park were reportedly designed by Kalamazoo architect A.M. Worthington while Howard Young did the decorating for the model unit located at 601 Lay Boulevard.⁴⁵

Mid-Twentieth Century Neighborhood Development

In keeping with the broader development trend of the neighborhood developing north to south, the residential streets closest to Miller Street were the last to be platted. Residential streets adjacent to Burdick and Portage developed quite densely by the early 1930s, but the portion of the Edison neighborhood south of Palmer Ave and east of Portage Street remained undeveloped until the 1940s.

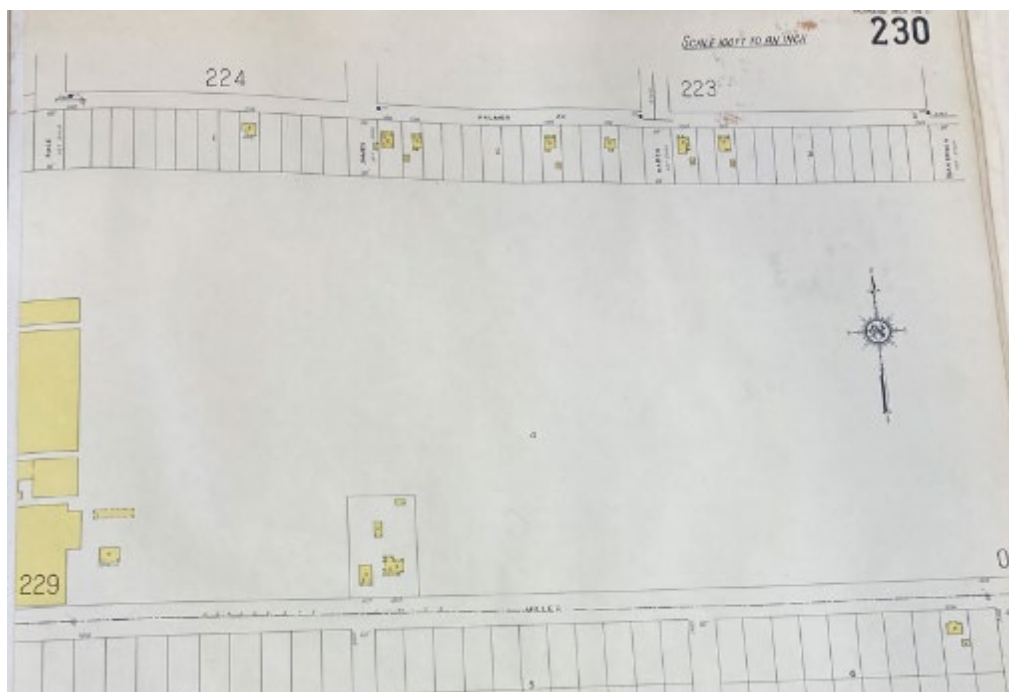


Figure 25: Undeveloped land south of Palmer Ave, 1932 Sanborn Map

⁴⁴ Sharon Ferraro, *Kalamazoo Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey*, Survey Report, 2001, 43.

⁴⁵ “Land Company, Helping Solve Housing Problem, is Building 56 Modern Homes,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, October 19, 1920.

There was a very low vacancy rate in Kalamazoo in the early 1940s, as a consequence of the Great Migration—the internal migration of Black residents from the rural south to the urban north—as well as wartime changes in population as the great demand for laborers in the wartime munitions factories caused localized migration to cities like Detroit, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Grand Rapids. Because of this, there was an increased demand for more housing and for new retail space to support the daily needs of these newly arrived residents. A 1940 survey indicated there were only 262 vacant single-family dwellings in the city, and 637 single and double dwellings were currently under construction at the time of the survey. Most of these dwellings were in the southeast residential area of the city, in the Edison neighborhood.⁴⁶

The Elmwood plat was surveyed in 1939 and was bounded by Miller Road, Factory Street, Palmer Street, and James Street. This area was one of the last portions of the neighborhood to be platted, and the houses represent a significant departure from the forms and styles seen north of Palmer Ave.



Figure 26: Roadside Advertisement for Charles B. Hays' Elmwood Plat, 1938, Kalamazoo Public Library

The houses in the Elmwood plat were constructed during and immediately following World War II and embody the distinctive Minimal Traditional style popularized at the time. For more information on the Minimal Traditional style and the impetus for its invention, please see the above section titled “Architecture.” This southernmost section of the

neighborhood tends to have larger lawns, houses with bigger setbacks, and some notable landscape variation including low, rolling hills on some of the properties. This area is an intact example of mid-twentieth century architecture and development patterns and much of the Elmwood plat is included in the proposed South Edison historic district.

⁴⁶ “Dwelling, Store Vacancies Here Reported As Low,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, Nov 17, 1941.



Figure 27: Aerial view advertisement for Elmwood plat feat. G. Van Bochove & Bros. greenhouses, 1938, Kalamazoo Public Library

Late-Twentieth Century and Present-Day Neighborhood Development

By 1950, most of Edison was densely developed but for the industrial land to the east and the few parks and recreation areas throughout the neighborhood. There is very little new construction from the post-war era except for infill construction replacing older building stock. Some notable contemporary construction includes the Apple Ridge Apartments at 2231 Flower Street, the Marketplace development off Collins Street and Marketplace Boulevard, and The Creamery at 1131 Portage Street. All three of these developments are affordable housing projects. There is a great demand for affordable housing in the neighborhood; a 2019 HUD study indicated that the greatest need for new housing in Kalamazoo was for people at or below 50 percent of Area Median Income.⁴⁷

The Apple Ridge development is a collection of ranch style affordable apartment units. The Marketplace is a development of 23 new construction houses ranging between 1,600-1,900 square feet sold to low- and moderate-income families.⁴⁸ The Marketplace opened in 2012. The

⁴⁷ Al Jones, "New Creamery apartments in Kalamazoo's Edison Neighborhood shows the issues of affordable housing," *Second Wave Media*, March 11, 2021.

⁴⁸ The Marketplace, Kalamazoo Land Bank, <https://kalamazoolandbank.org/portfolio-items/marketplace/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

Creamery, an apartment building consisting of 48 affordable housing units, was completing construction at the time of this reconnaissance survey.

Both The Marketplace and The Creamery were built as part of revitalization efforts in the Edison neighborhood, which has been one of the most affected neighborhoods in Kalamazoo by blight, demolition, vacancy, crime, and lack of redevelopment,⁴⁹ leading to many vacant lots and historic buildings threatened by demolition by neglect. The site of The Marketplace was vacant when the development was planned, while The Creamery is on the former site of the Klover Gold Creamery, which closed in 1997.⁵⁰ The former creamery was demolished after sitting vacant and blighted in the center of the Edison's commercial center for years. The Creamery is one of the many recent efforts to revitalize Edison's primary historic commercial corridor.

Figure 10 The Marketplace, Courtesy of Kalamazoo Land Bank



Figure 28: The Creamery, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

Proposed Hays Park / South Park Historic District—This proposed district is a large residential district platted by Charles B. Hays in 1900-1906. This proposed district is recommended eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Criterion C for Architecture.

Proposed South Edison Historic District – This proposed district is a large residential district on the southern edge of the Edison neighborhood. The majority of houses were constructed in the 1940s and 1950s. This proposed district is recommended eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Criterion C for Architecture.

Proposed Linden Park Historic District – This proposed district is a small residential district initially platted in 1890 with expansions in 1905 and 1910. The neighborhood of Linden Park was developed by Charles B. Hays and the original 56 houses were designed by Kalamazoo architect A.M. Worthington. This proposed district is recommended eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Al Jones, "Edison Neighborhood looks forward to The Creamery with its mix of residential and business spaces," *Second Wave Media*, Jan 31, 2019.

Architecture

The architectural resources in the bounds of the Edison neighborhood can be divided into several categories. The buildings surveyed are predominately residential. There are also a fair number of commercial, civic, industrial, and religious buildings in the bounds of the neighborhood. The industrial buildings tend to be concentrated on the east side of the neighborhood, adjacent to the Kalamazoo River. Their location is a vestige of the proximity of the necessity for the neighborhood's historic paper mills requiring access to waterways. The majority of commercial buildings are located along Portage Street and Burdick Street. Many of the civic and religious structures are also located along those thoroughfares although some religious buildings and schools are nestled within the residential streets.

The architectural identification forms categorize buildings on both style and form. The descriptive terminology used is based upon the Michigan Above-Ground Survey Manual (2018) and supplemented with McAlester's seminal guidebook *A Field Guide to American Houses*. The Edison neighborhood has a large collection of vernacular and folk houses which do not squarely fit within an architectural style. These houses were given a 'folk' prefix and then assigned the style or period which it most closely fits – i.e. 'Folk Victorian' or 'Folk National'. Vernacular and folk houses are often better defined by their building forms as they lack architectural detailing. The building forms, such as Upright and Wing, I-House, and Hall and Parlor, are also included on the architectural identification forms and give critical supplementary descriptive information to these vernacular dwellings.

The paragraphs below further discuss the range of building types and architectural styles documented in this survey. The sections are arranged first by function and then by style. The styles and functions listed below are not meant to be exhaustive or fully representative of every style recorded in the survey but rather to give an overview of the predominant styles in the neighborhood.

Commercial, Civic, Industrial, and Religious

While the Edison neighborhood is predominately residential there are a number of commercial corridors within the neighborhood. This includes the Washington Square area at the intersection of Portage and Washington Avenue. Portage Street and Burdick Street are lined with commercial structures along their full lengths through the Edison neighborhood. The commercial structures generally adhere to a few specific forms. The buildings surveyed are predominately one or two stories with a concentration of three-story buildings within Washington Square. The commercial structures largely date from the early twentieth century with some instances of mid- and late-twentieth century infill. Most of the commercial buildings are clad in brick and have flat roofs. Many are false front commercial storefronts with gabled roofs and tall parapets on the primary facades. There are also several commercial structures which are additions on the front of residential dwellings. These tend to lack high style architectural elements and are typically built of concrete block or brick. The commercial buildings tend to incorporate Art Deco decorative

elements while the later infill buildings have modern or contemporary stylistic elements. There are a few locations where very early commercial buildings are still extant. These buildings are concentrated on South Burdick and Mill Street and date to the mid- to late-nineteenth century. These buildings are vernacular with Italianate stylistic elements and tend to be clad in wood rather than brick.

The bulk of the industrial buildings in the Edison neighborhood are concentrated on the east side of the neighborhood, along Fulford Street and further east. Many of these buildings are not historic and are simple pole barns clad in corrugated aluminum. There is a concentration of very early twentieth century industrial buildings on Fulford Street. These are primarily masonry construction with arched top industrial steel windows and do not have significant decorative architectural features.

There is a small concentration of civic buildings in Washington Square. These buildings include the Washington Square Branch of the Kalamazoo Public Library, the Portage Street Fire Station, and the former Kalamazoo Trust and Savings Bank. Each of these buildings was constructed in a different architectural style with the library being Tudor Revival, the fire station being Richardsonian Romanesque, and the bank building being Art Deco inspired. Other civic buildings include the International style post office located on the southern edge of the neighborhood along Miller Street.

Many of the religious buildings in the Edison neighborhood have had multiple additions as their respective congregations grew and thus are of multiple architectural styles. This includes Stockbridge Avenue United Church, Seasons of Change Church, and Bethany Reformed Church. These churches all have Modern style additions but their core structures exhibit Gothic and Tudor Revival characteristics.

The text below outlines some of the defining characteristics of the common architectural styles seen in the commercial, industrial, religious, and civic buildings in the Edison neighborhood. This list is not exhaustive as there are numerous architectural styles seen in the neighborhood as well as plenty of buildings which have no clear architectural style.

Art Deco

Art Deco was popularized circa 1920-1940 and was typically used on commercial and public buildings. The style typically has flat walls and roofs with stylized geometric motifs often used on the cornice, parapet, and around openings. The geometric patterns are often chevrons and zigzags. In the Edison neighborhood, the Art Deco buildings are primarily brick clad and the geometric detailing is created through brick patterning. While minimal in form and style, the commercial buildings in the proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District are in the Art Deco style. These buildings tend to have geometric brick detailing and stepped parapets. One such building in this proposed district is the current Furr Auto Service building at 2009 Portage Street.



Figure 29: 2009 Portage Street, March 2021, KDG



Figure 30: 1310 Portage Street, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

2009 Portage Street – Current location of Furr Auto Service. Recommended as a contributing property within the proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District

1301 Portage Street – Current commercial building. Former Washington Square Bank Building. Recommended as a contributing property within the proposed Washington Square Commercial Historic District

1310 Portage Street – Current location of New City Church. The former B.M. Barber and Ernest Wise buildings. Recommended as a contributing property within the proposed Washington Square Commercial Historic District

Modern / Contemporary



Figure 31: 1018 Walter, April 2021, KDG

Modern and Contemporary architecture are characterized by an emphasis on form and a lack of ornament. There is debate about the precise start and end dates of the Modern Movement but in American it can be agreed it was at its peak popularity from about 1925-1970. Architectural historians agree that the death of Modernism occurred in 1972 with the demolition of Minoru Yamasaki's Pruitt-Igoe apartment complex. Many of the Modern style buildings in Edison, true to the Modern Movement, use materials such as cast concrete, aluminum curtainwall systems, and fiberglass spandrel panels.



Figure 32: 1121 Miller Road, 1964, Kalamazoo Public Library



Figure 33: 1121 Miller Road, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1018 Walter Street – Nicholas Kik Pool. The Nicholas Kik Pool was constructed in 1971 and is recommended individually eligible under Criterion A for Social History and Criterion C for Architecture

845 Gibson – The Arvco Corporation building is an example of International style architecture and is recommended individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture as an intact example of Modern style industrial architecture.

1121 Miller – Current location of the Kalamazoo Post Office. This building was constructed in 1959 and is recommended individually eligible under Criterion A for Politics and Government and under Criterion C for Architecture as an intact example of an International style United States Postal Service building.

Tudor Revival



Tudor Revival architecture was at its peak popularity from 1890-1940. This style of architecture often uses dark red brick and features steeply pitched roofs and rounded archways. Decorative features can include half-timbering, multi-pane glazing, and decorative brickwork and chimney pots. The Washington Square Branch library is the only non-residential example of Tudor Revival style architecture in the Edison neighborhood.

Figure 34: 1244 Portage Street, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1244 Portage Street – The Washington Square Branch library. This building was constructed in 1927 and is recommended both as a contributing property in the proposed Washington Square Commercial Historic District and as individually eligible under Criterion A for Social History and Criterion C for Architecture.

Spanish Revival

The Spanish Revival style was most popular between 1915-1940 and is characterized by low pitched roofs, arched doorways and window openings, the use of stucco, and red clay tile roofs. High style Spanish Revival buildings may also have exterior stairs and arched arcades as well as decorative tilework. There is only one example of commercial Spanish Revival style architecture in the Edison neighborhood located at 640 Portage Street.



Figure 35: 640 Portage, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

640 Portage Street – 640 Portage is a one-part commercial block building constructed in 1929. This property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture.

Residential

Due to historic development patterns of the neighborhood, the oldest houses are found on the north end of the neighborhood while the mid-twentieth century houses are found at the south end of the neighborhood. The houses exemplify the typical popular styles for their respective eras. The few nineteenth century houses left in the neighborhood are predominately Greek Revival and Italianate in style. The vast majority of houses were constructed in the first quarter of the twentieth century and include vernacular Folk, Craftsman, and Prairie styles as well as styles from the Victorian period, among others. The houses at the southern edge of the neighborhood, south of Palmer Avenue, are almost exclusively postwar minimal traditional houses. These architectural styles are described in more detail below.

Greek Revival

The Greek Revival style was at its peak between 1825-1860 and dwindled in popularity through the latter half of the nineteenth century. The Greek Revival style houses seen in the Edison neighborhood are some of the oldest houses in the neighborhood. The Greek Revival style is often seen on front gable or side gable house forms. The houses often have a cornice and gable returns or a full gable return and feature protruding porches supported by Doric or Tuscan style columns. Front doors are often highly decorative with simple or pedimented entablatures and transom and sidelights. Windows are typically 6-over-1. There are very few Greek Revival style houses in the Edison neighborhood as the style was waning in popularity when the neighborhood began seeing significant residential development. The few extant Greek Revival style houses in the neighborhood are simple, not highly decorative example so the style and date to the mid- to late- nineteenth century.



Figure 36: 1825 State, April 2021, KDG



Figure 37: 841 Reed, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1825 State Street – Constructed between 1860-1880. This house is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture but is recommended as not contributing to the proposed Ihling Everard Residential Historic District as it is outside of the period of significance for the proposed district.

841 Reed Ave – Constructed between 1860-1880. This house is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. The house may also be eligible under Criterion B as it may have been the house of D.C. Reed, cofounder of the D.C. and H.C. Reed and Company and namesake of Reed Avenue. Further intensive level research is required to confirm this connection and determine approximate construction date.

Italianate

The Italianate style was most popular between 1840 and 1885 and is identifiable on dwellings by their low-pitched roofs, widely overhanging eaves often supported by decorative brackets, and decorative window hoods. Windows are often tall and narrow, and very elaborate Italianate houses often feature a cupola or tower at the peak of the gable. Italianate houses are most commonly two- or three- stories and one-story variations are rarely seen. Similar to the Greek Revival style, there are very few examples of Italianate style residential houses in the Edison neighborhood due to the style's waning popularity when Edison was being most heavily developed.



Figure 38: 835 Reed, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

835 Reed Ave – Constructed between 1860-1880. This house is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture.

Folk

Folk style is one of the earliest architecture styles and has multiple subtypes including Native American, Pre-Railroad, and National. Unlike other architectural styles which were the product of changing taste and fashion, Folk houses exhibit little architectural decoration and are often simple, style-less dwellings built with little regard to popular fashions or taste. Folk style architecture often uses locally sourced materials, particularly in the Native American and Pre-Railroad subtypes where sourcing materials from a distance was often not feasible.

Native American Folk style architecture typically constituted of wood frame or earthwork construction and is the earliest Folk style structures seen in the United States. European colonists began constructing their variation of Folk style architecture upon settling in the Americas in the 17th century until a nationwide railroad system was in place at the end of the 19th century. Pre-Railroad style Folk houses typically consisted of frame houses, log houses, or earthwork masonry buildings depending on local material availability.

Folk National houses proliferated in the railroad era (beginning in the 1850s) when material required for balloon framing and wood clapboard became easily transported nationally. Folk National houses lack ornament and are often clad in wood siding. These houses are often front gabled, upright and wing, or I-house in form. Folk National style is the predominant style seen in houses in the Edison neighborhood. The volume of Folk National style houses in the neighborhood is likely due to their cheap and quick to construct design as well as their lack of period popular ornament meant the style defied changing tastes and fashions. Many houses in the Edison neighborhood are Folk Victorian, informed both by Folk style as well as details from the Victorian period. For more information on Folk Victorian architecture see below section titled ‘The Victorian Period’.



Figure 39: 1718 Egleston, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1718 Egleston – Constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing property in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

The Victorian Period

The Victorian period ushered in a series of architectural styles all popularized between 1860-1900 during the reign of the United Kingdom's Queen Victoria. These styles include: Second Empire, Stick, Queen Anne, Shingle, Richardsonian Romanesque, and Folk. Three of these styles are seen in the Edison neighborhood and they are: Queen Anne, Shingle, and Folk Victorian. While there are only a few Queen Anne and Shingle style houses in the Edison neighborhood, there are a fair number of Folk Victorian style houses in the neighborhood. The distinctive qualities of each of these three styles are as follows:

The Queen Anne style typically has a steeply pitched cross gabled or hipped roof with lower cross gables. This style tends to have the most detailing of all of the subtypes and often features turrets, Palladian windows, decorative brickwork, and spindle work on the porches. This style is often irregular in form with angled walls, projecting bays, towers and turrets.

The Shingle style is aptly named as it is identifiable by the use of wood shingles as exterior cladding. The wood shingles are often scalloped and can be installed throughout the exterior or just at gable peaks. Similar to the Queen Anne style, the Shingle style often has an irregular form and employs eyebrow dormers, bay windows, or Palladian windows.

Folk Victorian is closely related to Folk National style and has characteristics of both Folk and Victorian styles. These houses tend to have Folk National forms but often have some decorative spindle work, trim work, or decorative features such as gabled pediments applied. Folk Victorian is the most common style from the Victorian period seen in the Edison neighborhood.



Figure 40: 1113 Egleston, March 2021, KDG



Figure 41: 718 Clinton, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

718 Clinton Ave – This house is a Queen Anne style house constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

1113 Egleston Ave – This house is a Shingle Style house constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

1305 Clinton Ave – This house is a Folk Victorian house constructed between 1900-1920 with the distinctive semi-circular gable cut-out seen on many of the houses in the neighborhood. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

Colonial Revival

Colonial Revival was inspired by the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial event celebrating the centennial of America's independence. There are few examples of Colonial Revival style houses in the Edison neighborhood, most dating to the early 1900s and a few mid-century examples in the southern edge of the neighborhood. This revival style represented to some a romanticized

look back to the colonial period and a renewed patriotism in the nation⁵¹. The Colonial Revival style is often applied to I-plan or rectangular footprint houses with hipped or side gabled roofs. The entryways are often centered on the primary façade of the house and accentuated with pilasters and broken triangular and segmental pediments and fanlights or sidelights. Some more elaborate Colonial Revival houses also feature denticulated cornices.



Figure 42: 1307 Trails End, March 2021, KDG



Figure 43: 1118 Lay Blvd, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1307 Trails End Street – Constructed between 1940-1960. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed South Edison Historic District.

1118 Lay Boulevard – Constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

Dutch Colonial Revival

Dutch Colonial is considered a subtype of the Colonial style. The Dutch Colonial style was prevalent from around 1625 to circa 1840 and was most often found in areas of Dutch settlement along the Hudson River in the northeast United States. Dutch Colonial Revival, similar to Colonial Revival, was popularized at the tail end of the nineteenth century into the early- to mid-twentieth century during a renewed interest in early English and Dutch colonial houses. The Dutch Colonial Revival style can be identified by gabled roofs with flared eaves or by gambrel roof forms. The houses tend to be clad in wood and stone. There are a few examples of Dutch

⁵¹ Tom Paradis, “Architectural Styles of America and Europe,” ArchitecturalStyles.org, <https://architecturestyles.org/colonial-revival/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

Colonial Revival style houses in Edison, mostly concentrated in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District. The houses are easily identifiable by their gambrel roof forms.



Figure 44: 910 Lay Boulevard, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

910 Lay Boulevard – Constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

1015 Egleston Ave – Constructed between 1920-1940. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

Tudor Revival

Tudor Revival style was popularized from 1890-1940 and is characterized by steeply pitched gable roofs, often with a front facing gable on the primary façade, and by the use of decorative half-timbering, archways, and tall, narrow windows. Decorative Tudor Revival buildings may also have chimneys featuring decorative brickwork and chimney pots, eaves with sweeping curves, leaded glass windows, and decorative vergeboards. The few examples of Tudor Revival style architecture on residential houses in the Edison neighborhood tend to be rather vernacular with minimal ornament. These houses are often only identifiable as Tudor Revival by their distinct sweeping front facing gables.



Figure 45: 1504 Lay Boulevard, March 2021, KDG



Figure 46: 1506 Lay Boulevard, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1504 Lay Boulevard – Constructed between 1920-1940. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

1506 Lay Boulevard - Constructed between 1920-1940. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

Prairie

The Prairie style is a form of early Modernism popularized by architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The style was at its peak popularity from 1900-1920. Prairie style houses often have hipped roofs with widely overhanging eaves. Further, they tend to have wide, open porches supported on rectangular columns. Prairie style is similar to Craftsman style in its use of rectangular columns, wide overhanging eaves, and windows with divided lites often in a 3-over-1 pattern. The majority of Prairie style houses in the Edison neighborhood exhibit an American Foursquare form.



Figure 47: 902 Lay Boulevard, March 2021, KDG



Figure 48: 1019 Egleston, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1019 Egleston Ave – Constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

902 Lay Boulevard – Constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

Craftsman

The Craftsman style is one of multiple Early Modern architectural styles popularized from around 1900 to 1930. Craftsman houses typically have low, gabled roofs and feature exposed rafter tails or decorative false beams or brackets under the gables. The Craftsman style is typically seen on one-and-a-half story bungalow houses but is also applied to two-story houses on occasion. Bungalow type Craftsman houses often have low pitch shed roof dormers or gable roof dormers with exposed rafter tails centered on the primary façade. Craftsman style houses often have deep covered porches supported by battered piers or columns. Windows and doors are similar to those found on Prairie style buildings, and the windows tend to have divided lites in 6-over-1 or 3-over-1 configurations. There are a significant number of Craftsman style houses in the Edison neighborhood, likely due to the styles popularity during the boom years of residential growth in the area. Most are small, one-and-a-half story bungalows although there are a few examples of more high-style Craftsman style houses. Many of the porches on the Craftsman style houses found in Edison have been enclosed.



Figure 49: 521 Stockbridge, April 2021, KDG



Figure 50: 1713 Egleston, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

521 E. Stockbridge – Constructed between 1900-1920. This house is recommended as a contributing property in the proposed Hays Park / South Park Historic District.

1713 Egleston - Constructed between 1920-1940. This house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

Minimal Traditional

The Minimal Traditional style originated in the midst of the Great Depression and their popularity soared through the World War II and post-war era as more and more American's desired to become homeowners to satisfy the "American Dream". The Minimal Traditional style was most popular between 1935-1950 and its qualities and characteristics are largely shaped by material released by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) during that time. The Minimal Traditional house has a small footprint and is often one-story. The house is often side gabled and occasionally has a front facing gable detail on the primary façade. These houses have minimal to no architectural detail and are typically built as tract housing. Most of the houses in the proposed South Edison Historic District are Minimal Traditional in style and were developed during and post-World War II. These houses are some of the last constructed in the Edison neighborhood as the neighborhood became fully developed.



Figure 51: 1412 Trails End, March 2021, KDG



Figure 52: 1818 Buena Vista, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1412 Trails End St – Constructed between 1940-1960, this house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed South Edison Historic District.

1818 Buena Vista St - Constructed between 1940-1960, this house is recommended as a contributing building in the proposed South Edison Historic District.

Ranch

The Ranch style, similar to the Minimal Traditional, emerged in the midst of the Great Depression but remained popular much longer through the 1970s. The Ranch style is characterized by its long, low forms often with side gabled or cross gabled roofs. Ranch style houses often have moderate eave overhangs and may feature large, fixed picture windows or windows designed for maximizing cross ventilation such as jalousie, awning, or hopper windows. Ranch style houses often have multiple cladding styles such as siding, brick, and stone and may incorporate garages into the core block of the house or connect to a garage via a breezeway. Ranch houses are found on the southern edge of the Edison neighborhood within the proposed South Edison Historic District.



Figure 53: 1521 Fulton, March 2021, KDG



Figure 54: 1228 Franklin, March 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1521 Fulton Street – Constructed between 1940 and 1960, this house recommended as a contributing building in the proposed South Edison Historic District.

1228 Franklin Street - Constructed between 1940 and 1960, this house recommended as a contributing building in the proposed South Edison Historic District.

Industry

Some of the earliest industry in Kalamazoo included the milling of grain as this was a vital function for the agriculturally based economy in the early and mid-1800s. By 1860, there were several flour mills in and near Kalamazoo including Alcott's mill, which was built in 1859.⁵² Other early industries in Kalamazoo included agriculture (celery), windmill production, buggies, mandolins and guitars, stoves, and paper/paper products. By the late 1800s and early 1900s, Kalamazoo industry was dominated by paper production; cart, buggy, and automobile manufacturing; stove manufacturing; paper-related products production; and musical instrument manufacturing.



Figure 55: Kalamazoo Paper Company, Undated, Kalamazoo Public Library

Paper Mills

Because of its position on the banks of the Kalamazoo River and with multiple creeks flowing through the adjacent land, the Village of Kalamazoo was recognized early on as a potential site for a paper mill. Founded in 1866, the Kalamazoo Paper Company was the first paper company organized in Kalamazoo. The first corporate meeting occurred on October 1, 1866, and Portage Creek was dammed that same year.⁵³ The first years in business were not profitable and the original mill burned down in 1872. Despite these setbacks the plant was rebuilt of brick and was placed under the leadership of Samuel Gibson. With Gibson at the helm, the Kalamazoo Paper Company thrived with the output doubling in 1879 and doubled again in 1885.⁵⁴ Although not located in Edison, the Kalamazoo Paper Company ushered in an era of continued success in the papermaking industry for many Kalamazoo businessmen and residents.

Papermaking was present all over the city of Kalamazoo and in adjacent towns like Parchment and Vicksburg. As Kalamazoo grew and developed, its ideal location on the river combined with a steady stream of immigrants who worked the paper mills contributed to continued growth in the papermaking industry. In Edison, specifically, the King Paper/Allied Paper Company was located on Lake Street just east of Cameron; the massive Bryant paper mill stretched from Alcott

⁵² Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 72.

⁵³ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 100.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Avenue to Reed Street along Portage Creek; and the Michigan Paper Company was located at 2001 Fulford at the corner of Fulford and Lane Boulevards. The three Edison-based paper companies are discussed, below.



Figure 56: Bryant Paper Company, 1932 Sanborn Map

The Bryant Paper Company was founded in 1895 and expanded quickly during the first two decades of its existence. By 1925 the Bryant Paper Company had “ten paper machines, twenty-four coating machines, producing 75,000 tons of paper annually, and employing over 1,200 workers.”⁵⁵ Bryant Paper utilized Portage Creek to supply its water needs for the papermaking process, and workers flocked to the area to take advantage of the jobs the company offered.

This area on the southeast side of Kalamazoo was settled well before the large area on the east side of Portage Street. The purpose for this settlement was its proximity to the Bryant Paper Mill, which is a few blocks to the south of this district. One can only imagine that some of the fine older homes in this area were owned by some of the executives, while some of the smaller houses and lots, especially those along Terrace Court, were occupied by the mill workers.⁵⁶

Incidentally, Charles B. Hays, the former mayor of Kalamazoo and a prominent real estate magnate and homebuilder in the Edison neighborhood, served as a secretary of the Bryant Paper

⁵⁵ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 134.

⁵⁶ “Kalamazoo Historic Inventory, Phase IV,” The Kalamazoo Commission for Historical Preservation (1986): 31.

Company, and he was also instrumental in founding the King Paper Company as well.⁵⁷ The Bryant Paper Company was later merged into several other paper companies (Kalamazoo Paper Company, Riverview Coated Paper Company, Monarch Paper Company, King Paper Company, and others) to form the Allied Paper Company. Allied continued to operate the Bryant mill, but production slowed in the 1970s when business was affected by the increased awareness of the environmental impacts of papermaking combined with increased competition from other mills. The last papermaking processes at the Bryant Mill ceased sometime between 1986-1988.⁵⁸ Of what was once a vast complex only the Illinois Envelope Company building in the middle of the site still remains.

King Paper Company was founded in 1901 and was located on Lake Street just east of Cameron Street. By 1911, King Paper Company had four paper machines and nine coating machines.⁵⁹ As mentioned above, King Paper Company was merged into the conglomerate Allied Paper in 1922.⁶⁰ The King mill closed in 1970, and most of the buildings were demolished in 1977,⁶¹ however, the former administration building was deconstructed as it was planned to be rebuilt at the American Hydrogeology Corporation campus, a reconstructed collection of historic buildings.⁶²



Figure 57: Bryant Paper Mill, Undated, Kalamazoo Public Library

⁵⁷ Alex Florist, "Charles B. Hays," Kalamazoo Public Library (2005). <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/biographies/hays-charles-b/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁵⁸ "A Brief History of Allied Paper," AlliedPaper.net (2010). <http://alliedpaper.net/history.htm> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁵⁹ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 134.

⁶⁰ Elmer B. Hess, "The Kalamazoo Valley Paper Industry," *Indiana Academy of Science* 69 (1959): 229. 6795-Article Text-12907-1-10-20130401.pdf (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁶¹ "A Brief History of Allied Paper," AlliedPaper.net (2010). <http://alliedpaper.net/history.htm> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁶² Sharon Ferraro, personal communication, December 7, 2021.

Benjamin Lyon was employed by the Kalamazoo Paper Company but left in 1872 to start his own company in Plainwell called the Lyon Paper Company.⁶³ Later, the company was renamed the Michigan Paper Company. The Michigan Paper Company had a facility in Edison located at 2001 Fulford, which is shown on the 1932 Sanborn.

The paper industry was a major employer in Kalamazoo for much of the twentieth century; however, it faltered beginning in the 1970s and few paper related companies have survived to present day. This survey identified four paper-related companies still operating in the Edison neighborhood, those being River Valley Paper North, Evergreen Packaging, Aryco Container Corporation, and Specialty Packaging. Nearly all paper mill associated buildings in Edison have been demolished. The survey found many empty lots long associated with the paper mill industry but only the Illinois Envelope Company building, located at 400 Bryant Street, is still extant. The Illinois Envelope Company building is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places and, based on this reconnaissance level survey, continues to retain the requisite characteristics to warrant continued listing. The buildings of the King Paper/Allied Paper Company have been demolished while the Michigan Paper Company buildings were either demolished or were extensively rebuilt as the existing buildings at 2001 Fulford do not appear historic.

Representative Locations:

400 Bryant Street – Illinois Envelope Company Building. This building is already listed on the National Register and based on this reconnaissance survey it retains the requisite qualities to warrant continued listing.

1615-1727 Lake Street – Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers (former King Paper/Allied Paper Company location). This building is not recommended as eligible as the mill campus is no longer extant.

2001 Fulford Street – Michigan Paper Company. This building does not appear to be individually eligible as there appears to be no historic material extant.

Buggies, Railway Carts, and Automobile Production

Although Kalamazoo had several paper mills by the late 1800s there were many thriving industries and “the manufacture of paper was far from being the leading industry in Kalamazoo. Much more important was the manufacture of carts, buggies, carriages and their parts.”⁶⁴ As early as 1837 there were buggies being built in Kalamazoo as Warren Burrell opened a buggy building firm that year.⁶⁵

⁶³ Hess, 226.

⁶⁴ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 101.

⁶⁵ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 72.

One of the largest buggy manufacturing concerns was the Michigan Buggy Company, which had a large facility on Factory Street in the Edison neighborhood. Founded by the Lane and Lay families—names still recognizable in the boulevard names in the Hays Park/South Park neighborhood in Edison—the Michigan Buggy Company was successful almost immediately despite two devastating fires at their factory, one in 1896 and another in 1902. Despite the setbacks, a large new factory was built at 1811 Factory Street in Edison in 1902.⁶⁶ Realizing that automobiles were the way of the future, the Michigan Buggy Company began to produce its own automobiles, initially manufactured alongside their buggies and carts. “In 1914, the company, envisioning the end of the horse and buggy, started making an automobile called “The Mighty Michigan”. Competition and internal troubles closed the plant, however.”⁶⁷



Figure 58: Michigan Buggy Company, 1902, Kalamazoo Public Library

The large plant on Factory Street was later sold to Albert C. Barley, who incorporated the Barley Motor Car Company. In 1916, Barley introduced the luxury Roamer automobile which was produced at the Factory Street facility. The Roamer was a high end, custom-built car with a genuine leather top, nickel plated fittings, and famous clientele—silent film actress and producer



Figure 59: Couple with Roamer automobile standing in front of Roamer Automobile Factory, 1957, Portage District Library

Mary Pickford owned a Roamer. The 1917 price tag came in at \$1,850 while a Ford Model T by comparison cost \$500 in 1917. In 1924, the company was reorganized with Albert Barley selling his interest in the newly formed Roamer Motor Car Company. The facility on Factory Street in Kalamazoo continued producing the lower priced Barley automobile but was later rebranded as a Pennant. Pennant was

⁶⁶ David Kohrman, “Michigan Buggy Company,” Kalamazoo Public Library (2012). <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/business/michigan-buggy-company/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁶⁷ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 132.

marketed as a taxicab, and it competed with Checker cabs, also produced in Kalamazoo. The Pennant was out of production by 1926.⁶⁸

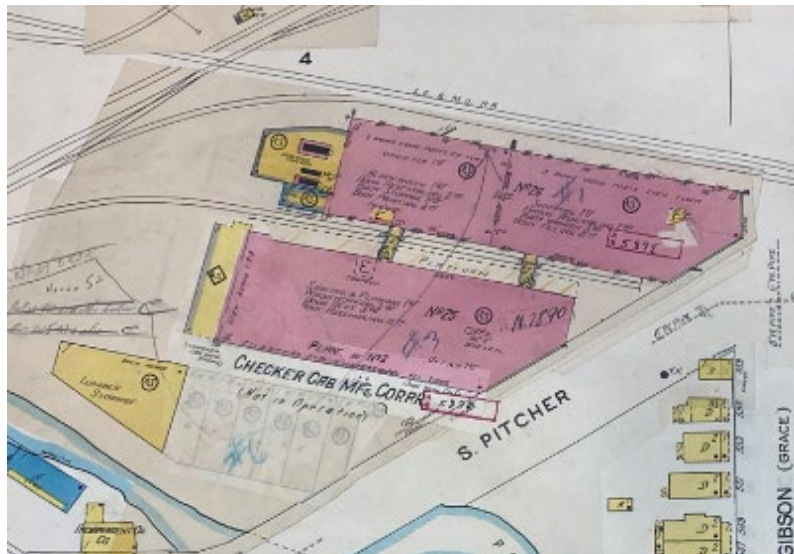


Figure 60: Checker Cab Company, 1908 Sanborn Map

The last company in Kalamazoo still actively producing automobiles was Checker Cab Company. Founded by Morris Markin in Joliet Illinois in 1922, Checker relocated to Kalamazoo in 1923. It flourished as it churned out the reliable yellow cabs that dominated U.S. cities in the middle decades of the twentieth century.⁶⁹ One of Checker Cab Company's early manufacturing facilities was located in the northern area of the modern-day Edison

neighborhood with its sawing and woodworking division located at 383 S. Pitcher. The factory at 383 S. Pitcher was originally constructed by the Lull Carriage Company and was later intended to house production of the Dort car, but that never came to fruition.⁷⁰ In 1923, Markin bought two factories in Kalamazoo including the S. Pitcher factory; however, it was the company's factory on N. Pitcher that would become the primary manufacturing location for Checker cabs. The 1932 Sanborn shows the factory was being used to feed and house the unemployed during the Great Depression. It seems likely this factory wasn't fully utilized during the 1930s by Checker, and it was sold in 1940 to the Kalamazoo Paper Box Company. Today, the building is nearly unrecognizable as a historic structure with modern additions and cladding obscuring whatever historic material might remain.

Representative locations:

383 S. Pitcher - Checker Cab Company. This building is not recommended as eligible as it is unclear if any of the original Checker Cab Company building remains underneath more recent modifications.

1811 Factory Street – Michigan Buggy Company/Michigan Motor Car Company. This building is not recommended as eligible due to lack of integrity.

1821-1925 Reed Avenue – Kalamazoo Railway Supply Company. This building is no longer extant.

⁶⁸ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 132.

⁶⁹ David Kohrman, "Checker Motors," Kalamazoo Public Library (2012) <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/business/checker-motors/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁷⁰ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 136.

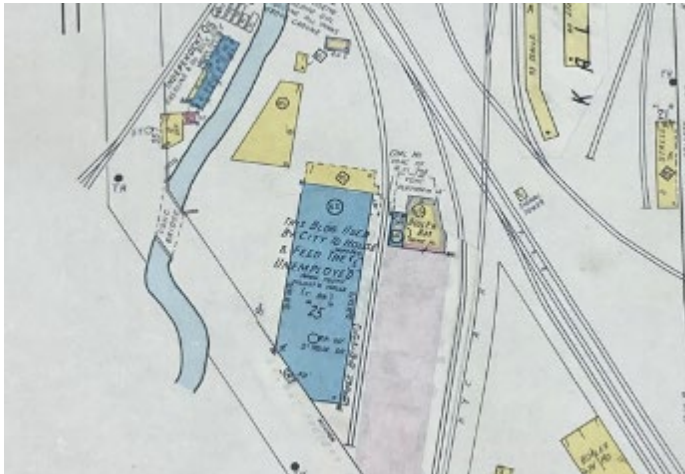


Figure 61: Checker Cab Company, 1932 Sanborn Map

Masonic and Fraternal Regalia

Ihling Brothers Everard Company was founded by Otto Ihling in 1869. Originally Otto made and bound books including blank ledger books and other business records books. Later, Ihling Everard added the manufacture of fraternal regalia to the list of items produced by the firm. Fraternal regalia became a mainstay of the business in later years. Located at 2020 Fulford, Ihling bought the factory from Gibson Guitar Corporation when that company

moved its production to Tennessee—see the music section, below, for additional details. The Ihling Brothers Everard Company closed in 1995 after 125 years in business. The old Gibson/Ihling factory is now used as space for multiple businesses including Team Pharmaceutical and Dill Instruments, makers of flowmeters temperature probes. The factory building is intact and in good condition with brick cladding and large steel industrial style windows.



Figure 62: 2020 Fulford, March 2021, KDG

Representative Locations:

2020 Fulford – Ihling Brothers Everard Company/Gibson Guitars Building. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this building is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Industry and Criterion C for Architecture.

Stoves

Kalamazoo Stove Company was located in the Edison neighborhood just north of Gibson Street on the banks of Portage Creek. Kalamazoo Stove had a slogan--“A Kalamazoo Direct to You” – that hinted at their unique business model: they sold their products directly to consumers instead of using retail stores. In its early years, the company was highly successful with 100,000 units sold in 1937. Nearly 8% of Kalamazoo’s population worked for the company at its peak.⁷¹

During World War II the Kalamazoo Stove Company converted nearly all of its manufacturing space to wartime products production, and the transition back to peacetime manufacturing proved difficult. Postwar, the company failed to pivot with the trends in the home appliance industry, which increasingly favored gas and electric appliances as opposed to wood or coal fired stoves. This failure to recognize appliance trends and increased competition from Tappan and General Electric ultimately signaled the demise of the Kalamazoo Stove Company.⁷² The company produced their last stove in 1952. Today the original factory appears highly altered and is not recognizable as a historic factory due to many modern additions and changes in materials.

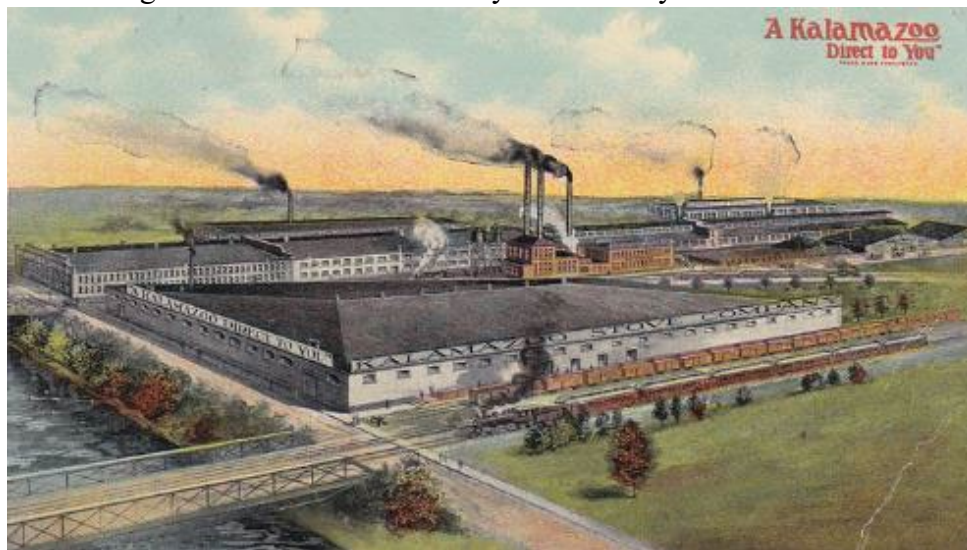


Figure 63: Kalamazoo Stove Company Postcard, Undated, Kalamazoo Public Library

Representative Locations:

701 Gibson Street – Kalamazoo Stove Works location. This property is not recommended as eligible as the buildings associated with Kalamazoo Stove Works are no longer extant.

⁷¹ “The Kalamazoo Stove Company,” *Museography*, Kalamazoo Valley Museum and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Vol. 3 Issue 3 (Spring 2004): 9.
https://web.archive.org/web/20060902060303/http://kvm.kvcc.edu/content/generalinfo/museographies/Museography_IX.pdf (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁷² Kris Rzepczynski, “Kalamazoo Stove Company,” Kalamazoo Public Library (1998) <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/business/kalamazoo-stove-company/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

Music Instruments

Kalamazoo was long home to Gibson Guitar Corporation. While their main factory was located elsewhere in Kalamazoo, an ancillary factory was located within the Edison neighborhood at 2022 Fulford. In 1964, Gibson bought the factory at 2022 Fulford from Kalasign Corporation, which had built the building in 1930.⁷³ The building on Fulford was known as Gibson Plant 3, and it reportedly produced amplifiers, strings, and pickups. This building was eventually purchased by the Ihling Brothers Everard Company in 1974.

An additional location associated with the history of music in Kalamazoo was identified during this survey: the Star Brass Works building located at 1501 Fulford Street. Star Brass Works originally produced pulleys and trolley wheels for electric street cars and had perfected the art of pouring non-ferrous metals, which were extremely long wearing and highly conductive for electricity. These qualities were ideal for the production of tone ring castings which Star Brass Works began producing for the Gibson Guitar Corporation in the 1920s. Star Brass Works produced banjo tone rings for Gibson from about 1927 to mid-1954, and these instruments are still highly prized by banjo players and aficionados today.⁷⁴

Based on Sanborn maps, it appears 1501 Fulford was Star Brass Works' original location. The building directly north, 1415 Fulford, was home to the Kersten Radio Equipment Company as of the 1908 Sanborn. Here, Kersten manufactured loudspeakers. However, by 1932 the Sanborn maps noted that 1415 Fulford was a "machine shop" and this building was utilized by Star Brass Works (located next door at 1501 Fulford) as there is an etching from the era which shows both 1415-1416 Fulford and 1501 Fulford being utilized by the Star Brass Works company—see image directly below.



Figure 64: Star Brass Works, Undated, Alamy

Representative Locations:

⁷³ "Gibson, Inc., buys Kalasign Plant," *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 5/14/1964.

⁷⁴ "Discussion Form: Gibson Banjo Tone Ring History," BanjoHangout.com, <https://www.banjohangout.org/archive/351936> (accessed November 11, 2021).

2020 Fulford – Gibson Guitar Factory 3 (Ihling Brothers Everard Factory). Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Industry and Criterion C for Architecture.

1501 Fulford – Star Brass Works. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Military, Transportation, Military, and Industry and under Criterion C for Architecture.

1415-1416 Fulford – Kersten Radio Equipment Company/Star Brass Works. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Industry and Transportation and under Criterion C for Architecture.

Current industry

Today the Edison neighborhood is home to a wide variety of industries with many of the larger companies clustered on Fulford and Factory Streets in the eastern end of the survey area. Current manufacturing concerns in this area include Schupan Industrial Recycling, Allnex, River Valley Paper North, and FlowServe.



Figure 65: FlowServe at 2100 Factory, April 2021, KDG

At 2025 Factory Street there is a large factory that used to be home to the Humphrey Company (a division of Ruud Manufacturing Company) in 1932 according to the Sanborn map of that year. Humphrey Company manufactured water heaters and was eventually bought out by Rheem Manufacturing Company in 1960.⁷⁵ In 1954-1955 the factory at 2025 Factory Street received a

⁷⁵ Rheem Manufacturing Company Historical Timeline, AshraeMadison.org, https://ashraemadison.org/downloads/Company_Histories/rheem_history.pdf (accessed November 11, 2021).

large Modern style office addition on the west side (primary façade) that faces Factory Street.⁷⁶ This Modern style office is still extant.



Figure 66: Former Rheem factory at 2025 Factory, April 2021, KDG

The old Rheem factory at 2025 Factory Street stretches approximately 1,116 feet long, creating a long secondary façade that faces Palmer Avenue. Along Palmer Avenue there are several other businesses that seem to utilize the old Rheem factory building on this secondary façade including River Valley Paper North addressed as 2115 Palmer Avenue. River Valley Paper North is a paper recycling company that manages, processes and

converts various types of paper. Viewed from Palmer Avenue the building appears largely modern as it is comprised of metal pole barn structures—it is unknown if these are historic buildings or modern replacements. Based on this survey, it is believed that River Valley Paper North is one of the only paper-related companies still operating in the Edison neighborhood—the others being Evergreen Packaging at 2315 Miller Road, Arvco Container Corporation at 845 Gibson, and Specialty Packaging at 2222 Glendenning Road. According to the 1958 Sanborn, Evergreen Packaging at 2315 Miller Road was originally built in 1950 and was the location of the International Paper Company, which produced paper milk containers.

Toward the south end of Edison there is a large Aunt Millie's bread factory which produces Aunt Millie's "BestGrains" line of products. Aunt Millie's is located at 2109 Portage Street and 807 Palmer Avenue at the northeast corner of Portage and Palmer. This area was not mapped in the 1908 Sanborn but by the 1932 Sanborn mapping this location was home to a doughnut factory and a bakery called the Peter Pan bakery.⁷⁷ Because this location has long been home to a bakery there may be some historic building fabric in the Aunt Millie's factory but as the building is large (and comprised of many different successive additions) the architecture that is visible from the right-of-way does not appear to be historic.

On the northeast side of the Edison neighborhood there are several large metal salvage yards and automobile junk yards including Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers at 1525 King Highway as well as several additional salvage yards at 1615-1723 Lake Street. There is an automobile salvage yard located just east of the 1615-1723 Lake Street salvage yards. Nearly the entire superblock

⁷⁶ "Ruud Will Move to Kalamazoo," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 9, 1954.

⁷⁷ Sharon Ferraro, Personal Communication, December 7, 2021

(bounded on the west by the backyard property line of the houses on Clarence Street and on the east by Hatfield Street and from E. Vine Street on the north to Lake Street on the south) contains salvage yards of various varieties. These salvage yards are located on the grounds of the former Allied/King Paper Company (see Paper Mills section, above, for additional detail).

Representative Locations:

2025 Factory Street – Former Humphrey/Ruud/Rheem Manufacturing Company factory. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Industry under Criterion C for Architecture.

2109 Portage Street – Aunt Millie’s Bakery. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as not eligible. It is unclear how much of the historic bakery remains underneath many successive modern additions.

Agriculture

Kalamazoo, the land within the bounds of the Edison neighborhood in particular, has long been a hotbed for agricultural activity. Prior to European settlement in the Kalamazoo area, “Native Americans gathered vast fields of wild rice that grew near the mouth of the Kalamazoo River”.⁷⁸ By the 1830s, many people who lived in the northeast like New York or New England were seeking opportunity in places like Michigan. “Most of the arable land in Western New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio had already been settled” at this point while the demand for farmland increased.⁷⁹ Southern Michigan had ideal farming soil, and many of Kalamazoo’s early settlers purposely chose this area because of the soil conditions. Kalamazoo, and the Edison neighborhood, was first known for its celery production and for its vegetable and flower production.

Celery

Celery was first grown in Kalamazoo in 1856 and prospered at the hands of the large Dutch community residing in the city. The wet, mucky soils found on the south side of the city, where the Edison neighborhood is located, were particularly fertile and suited for celery production. Some of the earliest celery fields were located in or adjacent to the Edison neighborhood “along Lake Street and Stockbridge Avenue between Burdick and Portage and along South Burdick Street.”⁸⁰ George Taylor, a Scottish man who emigrated to Kalamazoo in 1855, is widely attributed with bringing celery to Kalamazoo while Cornelius De Bruin is credit with starting

⁷⁸ “Kalamazoo County, MI Genealogy & Local History: Brief History,” Kalamazoo County MIGenWeb, <http://www.migenweb.org/kalamazoo/history/history.htm> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁷⁹ John T. Houdek and Charles F Heller Jr., “The Emergence of Prosperous Farmers and Businessmen in Nineteenth-Century Kalamazoo County, Michigan,” *Michigan Historical Review* 37, 2 (Fall 2011), 76.

⁸⁰ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 109.

celery production in the city.⁸¹ A Michigan Historical Marker dedicated to Taylor, De Bruin and the development of Kalamazoo's celery industry is located at the intersection of Crosstown Parkway and Park Street⁸² – just west of the Edison neighborhood bounds.

Taylor founded a celery nursery in the Edison neighborhood which, in 1873, spanned between Portage Street and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad and sat between Reed Street to the north and Alcott Street to the south.⁸³ This is the current location of the Charles Hays' Linden Park Subdivision which was developed in 1919. Celery growth and production quickly



Figure 67: Celery gardening as depicted in the 1908 Sanborn Map

expanded, and, by the 1880s, “one hundred seventy families worked as celery growers in the muck and around the town”.⁸⁴ Upjohn Park is another location where celery once grew in Kalamazoo. A 1908 Sanborn map indicates this area, currently bounded by E. Crosstown Parkway, Walter Street, Lake Street,

and Portage Creek, as for ‘celery gardening’. By 1910, the area is platted as “Walter Hoek’s Add.” And shown as subdivided lots in the George A. Ogle & Co. atlas. In the 1932 Sanborn Map the area is shown as Upjohn Park, and any residential development that occurred prior had been moved to the eastern side of the city.⁸⁵ It is unclear why the area was never fully developed with residential properties as intended in 1910, but it is possible it was due to the muck soil conditions, which made it so ideal for celery growing.

⁸¹ “Kalamazoo County, MI Genealogy & Local History: Celery Cultivation,” Kalamazoo County MIGenWeb, <http://www.migenweb.org/kalamazoo/celery.htm> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁸² “Kalamazoo County, MI Genealogy & Local History: Celery Cultivation,” Kalamazoo County MIGenWeb, <http://www.migenweb.org/kalamazoo/celery.htm> (accessed November 11, 2021); Michigan Historical Markers, Michigan History Center, <https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/HistoricalMarkers/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁸³ Beers Atlas 1873, Burton Collection, Detroit Public Library.

⁸⁴ Peter J. Schmitt and Balthazar Korab, *Nineteenth-century Homes in a Midwestern Village* (Kalamazoo: Kalamazoo City Historical Commission, 1976), 24.

⁸⁵ John Urschel, *City of Kalamazoo Parks*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Friends of Recreation, 2008), 39.

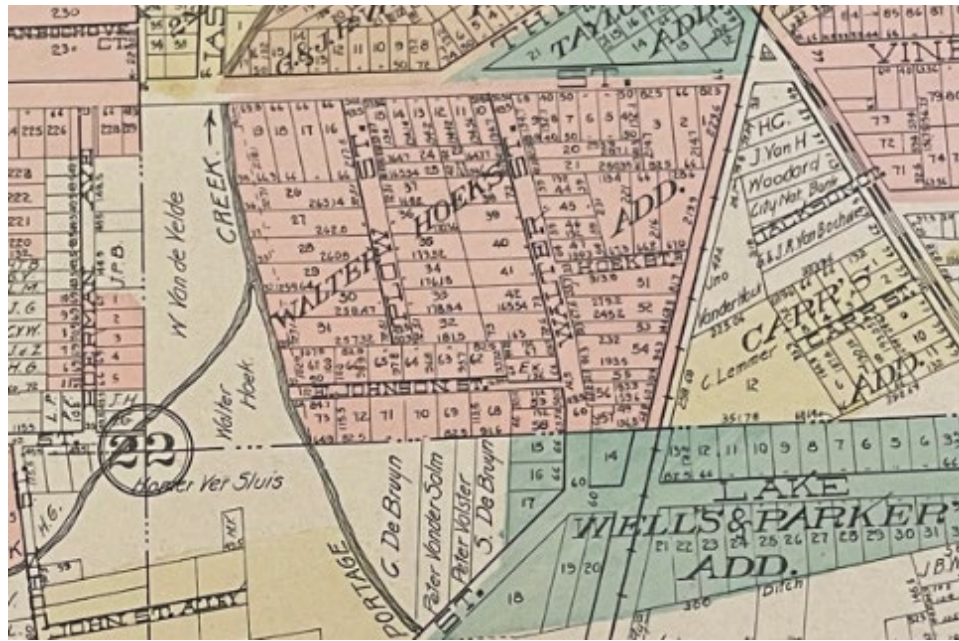


Figure 68: Walter Hoek's Addition in location of former celery fields, 1910 Ogle Atlas



Figure 69: Upjohn Park in location of former Walter Hoek's Addition, 1932 Sanborn Map

Not only did the celery farmers produce stalks of the crunch(y) vegetable, but some of the more successful celery entrepreneurs produced salad dressing, soup, celery mustards, and even medicinal products to sell. The celery product was first sold door to door but eventually companies were formed, including wholesalers like The Bullard Celery Company, and the

product was shipped nationwide.⁸⁶ “Kalamazoo County was the Celery Capital of the World in the early decades of the last century. Celery touted as ‘fresh as dew from Kalamazoo’ was shipped throughout the U.S.”⁸⁷

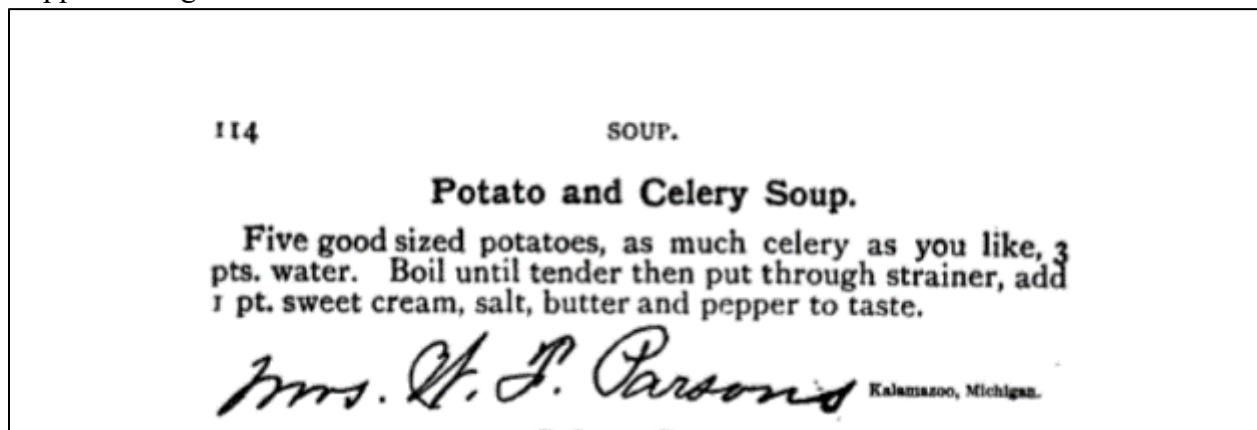


Figure 70: Potato and Celery soup recipe, 1893 Home Queen Worlds Fair Souvenir Cook Book, Google Books

By 1900, there were over 4,000 acres of celery farms stretching between Portage and the City of Kalamazoo. These farms were small though, most between three and ten acres and some even in residential backyards.⁸⁸ Over 350 individual celery growers and shippers are listed in the 1899 *Polk's Kalamazoo City Directory*⁸⁹ – and many of them resided in or adjacent to the Edison neighborhood. Frederick Van Zee, the likely namesake of VanZee Street, was listed as a celery grower at 1816 Burdick in 1889 and at 1822 S Burdick in 1899.⁹⁰ His farm, although just outside the bounds of the Edison neighborhood, likely employed other Edison residents as well. In the 1913 *Polk's Kalamazoo City Directory*, Cornelius Plantefaber is listed as a celery grower residing at 1818 S Burdick.⁹¹ It is unclear whether he is the inheritor of Van Zee's celery farm or merely an employee at the farm. One indication of celery growing thriving into the 1920s is the listing of Daniel Smith as a celery grower located at 1642 VanZee Street in 1921.⁹² Van Bochove & Brothers had a celery shipping location at Third and Portage Streets, which is no longer extant.

Celery growing was not only a livelihood for many but also a key element in the social history of the Edison neighborhood. The Kalamazoo County Fair held contests for the best fall vegetables, which included celery stalks. During World War II, the county fair expanded to also offer a

⁸⁶ Ethel Balls and Marie Lassfolk, *Living in Kalamazoo* (Kalamazoo: The Board of Education of the City of Kalamazoo, 1958), 10.

⁸⁷ “Living in Kalamazoo: The History of Kalamazoo, MI,” <https://www.kalamazoomi.com/hisf.htm> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁸⁸ Judith Lin, “Kalamazoo, MI: Celery Days,” *Chicago Reader*, September 6, 1990. <https://chicagoreader.com/news-politics/kalamazoo-mi-celery-days/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁸⁹ Larry B. Massie and Peter J. Schmitt, *Kalamazoo: The Place Behind the Products* (Staunton, VA: American History Press, 1998), 68.

⁹⁰ *Polk's Kalamazoo City Directory*, R.L. Polk, 1889; *Polk's Kalamazoo City Directory*, R.L. Polk, 1899.

⁹¹ *Polk's Kalamazoo City Directory*, R.L. Polk, 1913.

⁹² *Polk's Kalamazoo Directory*, R.L. Polk, 1921.

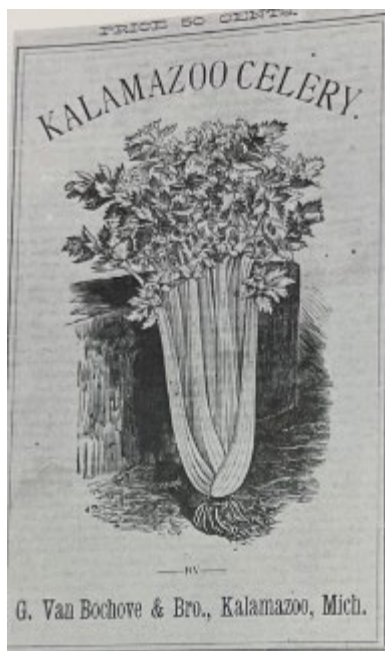


Figure 71: Van Bochove & Bros. Ad, Undated, Western Michigan University Archives

Victory Garden competition.⁹³ These competitions allowed for both amateur and commercial or market gardeners to compete and socialize with other celery growers. There were also multiple organizations devoted to celery growing and marketing celery. These organizations included the Kalamazoo Celery Growers, Inc. and the United Growers, Inc.⁹⁴

By the 1920s the popularity of celery growing began to dwindle and steadily declined through the mid-twentieth century. A variety of reasons caused the decline of the celery industry including competition from California and Florida, a loss in workers due to the

World War II draft,⁹⁵ and competition from the local paper mills and industry jobs which offered a more competitive pay.⁹⁶ There is minimal remaining evidence of the celery industry's significance in the Edison neighborhood today. A few properties have celery barns on their property still. Because celery farming required particular attention it was best farmed in small plots varying from 5- to 10-acres. Often, small celery farms were run by a family with children often tending to the constant irrigation and care the plants require. Celery was typically planted in rows in the mucky soil and covered with wooden planks to shield from sun in the summer months and then mounded over with soil to protect from frost in cold months.⁹⁷ Most work was done by hand and best done in smaller plots. Because farms were often quite small and many were family operated, the city was likely at one time littered with individual celery barns for each farm plot. A few celery barns were identified in this reconnaissance level survey. The residence at 1116 Washington Ave has a large celery barn converted into an auto garage in the rear of the property. 912 Hays Park Avenue has a garage



Figure 72: Mr. & Mrs. Jake Moyer, celery farmers in Vicksburg, MI, circa 1900, Kalamazoo Public Library

⁹³ "Victory Gardeners Get Chance to Show Skill in County Fair", *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 4, 1943.

⁹⁴ "County's 29 Types of Soil Afford Variety of Agricultural Pursuits", *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 1, 1932.

⁹⁵ "Farming Continues to Decline in the County", *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 23, 1960.

⁹⁶ Judith Lin, "Kalamazoo, MI: Celery Days," *Chicago Reader*, September 6, 1990. <https://chicagoreader.com/news-politics/kalamazoo-mi-celery-days/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

⁹⁷ Massie and Peter J. Schmitt, *Kalamazoo: The Place Behind the Products*, 124.

that has the characteristic shape of a celery barn including the gambrel roof and second floor openings.



Figure 73: Former celery barn at 1116 Washington Ave, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1116 Washington Ave – House with celery barn converted into auto garage. This house is recommended as a contributing building and barn in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District

912 Hays Park Ave – House with auto garage that resembles a celery barn. This house and barn are recommended as a contributing property in the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District

Upjohn Park – Current public park this is the location of former celery fields. Based on the results of this reconnaissance level survey, this park is recommended as likely eligible under Criterion A for Social History pending further intensive level research

Flower Bedding and Vegetable Industry

Following the decline of the celery industry, Kalamazoo became a thriving center for flower and vegetable production. A 1960 Kalamazoo Gazette article states that “dying fame as the celery capital of the nation has not left Kalamazoo area growers idle”.⁹⁸ The same article attests Kalamazoo at one time had 800 acres of celery fields, the majority of which have been converted to flower and vegetable fields. This holds less true for the Edison neighborhood where much of the celery fields are now open land, industrial sites, and the Upjohn Park. This area is the least developed of the Edison neighborhood and it is unclear why flower bedding or vegetable production was not developed in this location following the closure of the celery fields.

Just as the Dutch played a critical role in developing the celery industry, the Dutch were foundational to the pivot to the flower bedding industry. “The Dutch in Kalamazoo followed their national tradition of flower cultivation which accounts for the large numbers of greenhouses

⁹⁸ “Plants Big Business Here”, *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 23, 1960.

in the area.”⁹⁹ Many of these flower greenhouses are located just south of the Edison neighborhood and fill much of the distance between Kalamazoo and Portage.

Just as the celery industry declined in the post-war years, the flower bedding industry has seen a decline in recent years. The flower bedding industry was still peaking in Kalamazoo into the early 2000s. The Natural Agricultural Statistic Service’s 1982 census states Kalamazoo had 58 flower farms with 3,843,751 square feet under greenhouse glass and by 2007 that number had grown to 10,812,542 square feet.¹⁰⁰ This growth has slowed, and many of the prominent Kalamazoo County flower growers have ceased production. In 2012, the Elzinga & Hoeksema Greenhouse, the largest greenhouse in Kalamazoo County, closed.¹⁰¹ Elzinga & Hoeksema Greenhouse was located south of Kalamazoo City near Portage like many of the other large greenhouse facilities in the county. While much of the flower bedding industry occurs today outside of the Kalamazoo city limits on larger plats of land, there were historically flower shops and greenhouses in the Edison neighborhood.



Figure 74: Van Bochove & Bros. Greenhouse, 1958 Sanborn Map

A review of Sanborn maps indicates there were some greenhouses in the Edison neighborhood used for flower bedding, none of which are still extant. The G. Van Bochove & Brothers greenhouse was on the corner of Miller and Flower Streets on the southern border of the neighborhood. G. Van Bochove & Brothers, like many other Dutch agriculturalists, first were celery growers before transitioning to the flower bedding industry. The two brothers, Garrett and John R.

Van Bochove, operated as major celery shippers out of a facility at Third (now E. Crosstown Parkway) and Portage. Eventually they relocated to the Miller and Flower Street greenhouse location where they grew flowers. This greenhouse operated from 1905 until 2007. The flower shop and greenhouse, located at 1025 Miller Street, is still extant and is operating as George’s Appliance shop. The building at 1025 Miller Street has lost its historic integrity due to the alterations to the greenhouse and to the building’s façade. G. Van Bochove & Brothers also had

⁹⁹ “Kalamazoo County, MI Genealogy & Local History: Dutch in Kalamazoo,” Kalamazoo County MIGenWeb, <http://www.migenweb.org/kalamazoo/dutchin.htm> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁰⁰ Rosemary Parker, “Kalamazoo County bedding plant industry still coming up roses for some growers, but the landscape is rocky,” *MLive*, Jan 13, 2013.

¹⁰¹ Chris Beytes “Elzinga & Hoeksema Greenhouse Closes,” *Grower Talks*, Dec 27, 2012, <https://www.growertalks.com/Article/?articleid=19678> (accessed November 11, 2021).

flower fields. This land has now been developed and is the current location of the Apple Ridge apartments at 2231 Flower Street. Another flower greenhouse, Blossom Shoppe, existed at 209 E. Stockbridge. After the Blossom Shoppe closed, the house was converted to Brothers Beta Club, a gay drag bar. The house was badly burned in March of 2005 by an arsonist and subsequently demolished.¹⁰²



Figure 75: Van Bochove & Brothers Flowerland, 1963, WMU Luna Insight Collection



Figure 76: George's Appliances, Former Van Bochove & Brothers Flowerland, April 2021, KDG

¹⁰² "Officials: Fire at gay club was arson," *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 25, 2005.



Figure 77: Blossom Shoppe, 1939, WMU Luna Insight Collection



Figure 78: Vacant lot at 209 E. Stockbridge, former location of Blossom Shoppe, April 2021, KDG

Industrialization and the growth of agriculture at large led to many farms being developed in more rural areas in Kalamazoo County including Climax Township and Comstock Township, among others. The transition to large, commercial farms meant that little farming occurred within the Edison neighborhood, which had quite a bit of development by the 1870s and lacked the land needed for large scale farming. It is possible though that these prosperous, large scale farmers came into Kalamazoo and possibly Edison for social gatherings and business. As authors Houdek and Heller, Jr. put it in their article on prosperous Kalamazoo County farmers, “it could certainly be said for more than a few of these prosperous farmers that they operated with one boot in the country and the other in town.”¹⁰³

The Edison neighborhood has long had a thriving farmer’s market (See below section titled “Social History” for more information). It is very possible that many of these prosperous out of town farmers came to the Edison neighborhood to sell their produce at the farmer’s market. The farmer’s market is currently located at 1204 Bank Street, and the winter market is across the street at 1157 Bank Street. The farmer’s market is undergoing substantial renovations at the time of this reconnaissance level survey, and it is unclear how much of the historic farmer’s market infrastructure will be retained and restored versus replaced with modern structures. The market originally existed on Portage Street adjacent to where the Washington Square branch public library is currently located.

The legacy of agricultural production in the Edison neighborhood still lives on. Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s ValleyHUB at the Food Innovation Center at 224 E. Crosstown Parkway is a “farm, food hub, and education center,” which “showcases a range of sustainable agricultural practices.” This urban farm sits on five acres and includes multiple hoop houses, a greenhouse, and outdoor beds. While not historic, this site sits on land which was once used for

¹⁰³ John T. Houdek and Charles F Heller Jr., “The Emergence of Prosperous Farmers and Businessmen in Nineteenth-Century Kalamazoo County, Michigan,” *Michigan Historical Review* 37, 2 (Fall 2011), 76.

cultivating celery and is evidence of the continued devotion to agricultural practices in the neighborhood and Kalamazoo at large. There is also a large facility which manufactures fruit processing equipment at 1910 Lake Street in the northeast corner of the neighborhood. This facility, Dunkley International Inc., was founded in the 1800s by Sam Dunkley and is most known for inventing the cherry pitter.¹⁰⁴



Figure 79: Greenhouses at KVCC' ValleyHUB Food Innovation Center, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

1025 Miller Street – George's Appliance Co. Former location of C. Van Bochove & Bros. flower shop and greenhouse. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is not eligible due to a loss in integrity and inappropriate modifications.

1157 Bank Street – Winter Market. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is not eligible as it does not meet the threshold for significance in any of the criterion.

1204 Bank Street – Farmer's Market pavilion. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Agriculture and Social History. This determination of eligibility is dependent upon the current restoration work occurring on site and if it is historically compliant.

¹⁰⁴ "History of Dunkley International," Dunkley International, 2021, <https://www.dunkleyinternational.net/about> (accessed November 11, 2021).

224 E. Crosstown Parkway – Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s ValleyHUB at the Food Innovation Center. This property is not eligible as it does not meet the age requirement for the National Register.

1910 Lake Street – Dunkley International Inc. This property is not eligible as it does not meet the age requirement for the National Register. Despite the company having origins in the 1800s, the present building on site is less than 40 years old.

Social History

The social history of Kalamazoo centers around the many lodges, societies, organizations, meeting places, festivals and celebrations, and other practices, spaces, and places meant to promote the welfare of society. Edison is home to some significant organizations that have sought to improve the lives of local citizens.

Fraternal Orders and Societies

As in the rest of the country, fraternal orders were popular in Kalamazoo during the mid and late nineteenth century. A lodge of Odd Fellows was started in Kalamazoo in 1845, while the “Kalamazoo Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons was formed and a charter granted in 1854; additionally, the Peninsular commandery of Knights Templars was organized under a dispensation granted in 1856.”¹⁰⁵ These organizations provided socialization and important business networking for the men who joined. By 1887, there were thirteen societies located in Kalamazoo including the Eagles, Foresters, Knights of Honor, Modern Woodman, Odd Fellows, Moose, Owls, among others.¹⁰⁶ Fraternal regalia manufacturer Ihling Brothers Everard Company may have increased membership in these societies since the business was a thriving and noted part of Kalamazoo life for 125 years. Nonetheless, fraternal organizations faced steep declines in membership across the country during the 1980s and 1990s. One 1995 study showed Lions membership was down by 12% since 1983, Elks membership was down 18% since 1979, Shriners membership was down 27% since 1979, and the Masons were down a staggering 39% since 1959.¹⁰⁷ As evidence of this decline, the Ihling Brothers Everard Company closed its doors in 1995 with the company CEO acknowledging that membership in fraternal organizations was slipping to the point the company could no longer make a successful business.¹⁰⁸

Today only one fraternal organization remains in the Edison neighborhood. The Fraternal Order of the Eagles is located at 1332 Branch Street—the building was an unnamed shop in the 1932 Sanborn and was later used as the location of the Piccadilly Inn and Restaurant in the 1940s. By

¹⁰⁵ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 84.

¹⁰⁶ “Kalamazoo Fraternal Organizations Collection,” WMU Libraries’ Digital Finding Aids, Western Michigan University. <https://aspace.library.wmich.edu/repositories/3/resources/98> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁰⁷ Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* (January 1995): 5.

¹⁰⁸ Lynn Turner, “Ihling Bros. folds after 125 years in business,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 2, 1995.

the 1958 Sanborn the building is noted as being a “Lodge Hall.” Although of historic age the building at 1332 Branch Street does not appear to meet the criteria for individual eligibility nor does there appear to be a cohesive historic district in the vicinity.



Figure 80: Kalamazoo Stove Co. employees inside the Piccadilly Inn and Restaurant, c. 1940s, WMU Archives

Representative Examples:

1332 Branch Street – Fraternal Order of Eagles. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is not eligible as it does not meet the threshold for significance in any of the criterion.

Libraries

To promote literacy and to provide a place for the community to gather for improvement, the first public library was established in Kalamazoo in 1872 at Corporation Hall.¹⁰⁹ By 1881, the library owned 8,355 volumes. The first purpose-built library was constructed in 1893 at South and Rose Streets, outside the Edison neighborhood.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 108.

¹¹⁰ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 114.

Recognizing that the south side of Kalamazoo was rapidly developing, a temporary library was opened in the Foy Block building in 1919 in Washington Square while the planning for the permanent Edison branch library progressed.¹¹¹ The area selected for the Edison neighborhood branch library was once the location of a mineral spring bathhouse according to an 1873 map.¹¹² The 1890 atlas of Kalamazoo shows three buildings where the library would later be placed (on the west side of Portage between Collins and Washington), although the type of building and purpose is not recorded.

Edison received its own branch library in 1927; the building is a fine example of Tudor Revival style architecture. Designed with a unique shape to fit its angled lot, the library was



arranged around a centered vestibule where the main circulation desk was located. The children's reading room and the adults reading room branch out from either side of the main vestibule, enabling a small staff to monitor both areas simultaneously. The building is one of the standout pieces of revival architecture in the Edison neighborhood and was designed by Kalamazoo based architects Billingham and Cobb.

Figure 81: Aerial photo of Washington Square featuring the Washington Square Branch library, 1984, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro

Representative Examples:

1244 Portage Street – Kalamazoo Public Library - Washington Square Branch. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture and may be eligible under Criterion A for Social History dependent upon further intensive level research.

¹¹¹ Sharon Ferraro, Washington Square draft National Register Nomination, 2005.

¹¹² Beers Atlas 1873, Burton Collection, Detroit Public Library.

Farmer's Markets

A thriving farmer's market has existed in the Edison neighborhood since at least the 1920s. A 1932 Sanborn Map depicts the 'City Market' at the intersection of Portage Street and Washington Ave.¹¹³ Today the intersection of Portage Street and Washington Avenue is a public parking lot servicing the Washington Square Branch of the Kalamazoo Public Library.

The current farmer's market exists at 1204 Bank Street, the intersection of Bank Street and Collins Street, not far from the original location. The land for this farmer's market was acquired by the City in 1947.¹¹⁴ The current location consists of three permanent covered structures arranged in a 'U' shape with a small building in the middle of the 'U.' During the survey in 2021, the farmer's market shed were undergoing substantial renovation. The shed swill be retained and repaired during this work. There is another farmer's market—called the Bank Street Farmer's Market—located at 1157 Bank Street, which is across the street from the Kalamazoo Farmer's Market. The 1958 Sanborn shows that the 1157 Bank Street address was a wholesale grocery business.

Representative Examples:

1157 Banks Street – Bank Street Farmer's Market. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended not eligible as it does not meet the threshold for significance in any of the criterion.

1204 Bank Street – Kalamazoo Farmer's Market. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Agriculture and Social History. This determination of eligibility is dependent upon the current restoration work occurring on site and if it is historically compliant.

Ethnic Heritage

The Edison neighborhood has a diverse ethnic history, one which has evolved over the course of the neighborhood's history. A 2018 article by Second Wave Media put it aptly when it stated: "Edison's nearly 10,000 residents in 2.8 square miles represent a true melting pot with a population of nearly 19 percent Hispanic, 28 percent African American, and 49 percent Caucasian, a number that reflects a variety of European heritage, including Dutch and German. A small percentage of Asian and others also make up Edison's residents, according to the 2016 census."¹¹⁵ The many ethnic enclaves which have existed or exist today in the neighborhood should be better investigated and documented in an intensive level survey. This reconnaissance

¹¹³ 1932 Sanborn Map, Sanborn Map Company, WMU Zhang Archives.

¹¹⁴ John Urschel, *City of Kalamazoo Parks*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Friends of Recreation, 2008), 60.

¹¹⁵ Theresa Coty-O'Neil, "Edison: Where Helping Your Neighbor is What People Do and Diversity is a Matter of Pride," *Second Wave Media*, April 5, 2018.

level survey identified some of the major ethnic groups that have called Edison home in the past or present.

Eastern European Settlement

Kalamazoo was initially settled by Yankees, primarily settlers who had travelled west from east coast states, such as Connecticut born Titus Bronson, the first documented Anglo-American settler in the City of Kalamazoo. Not long after the town's founding a large Dutch population settled in the area. The first party of Dutch immigrants arrived in 1850.¹¹⁶ Dutch immigrants spoke regional dialects, and this first generation of Dutch immigrants referred to themselves as Zeelanders, Groningers, and Frisians, among others, rather than as Dutch and settled separately for the most part. Most Dutch immigrants settled in north Kalamazoo¹¹⁷, in what is now the Northside neighborhood, although plenty of Dutch immigrants also settled in southern Kalamazoo adjacent to the celery fields. The Zeelanders settled in what is now the Edison neighborhood while the Groningers settled in north Kalamazoo.¹¹⁸ While George Taylor is largely attributed with first growing celery in Kalamazoo, it was the Dutch people who made Kalamazoo 'celery famous.'¹¹⁹

Dutch farmers were responsible for clearing land for growing celery. This land clearing occurred mostly "along Lake Street and Stockbridge Avenue between Burdick and Portage and along South Burdick Street."¹²⁰ Cultivating celery was labor intensive and required specialized technology which meant it was best cultivated in small plots of land rather than large farms.¹²¹ The celery fields in the Edison neighborhood were most likely a collection of many small 5- to



Figure 82: Hungarian Settlement House at 610 Mills as depicted on the 1932 Sanborn Map

10-acre plots of land each farmed by individual Dutch families. The Dutch were able to essentially monopolize the celery industry due to their dedication to learning and perfecting the labor-intensive process of growing celery.¹²² Many of the first residents in the Edison neighborhood were Dutch immigrant farmers living adjacent to the celery fields in the center and west side of the

¹¹⁶ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 68.

¹¹⁷ Kathy Jessup, "Kalamazoo has been both a boiling pot and a melting pot throughout its history," *MLive*, Jan 21, 2019.

¹¹⁸ Robert P. Swierenga, "The Western Michigan Dutch", Paper presented to Holland Genealogical Society, Holland, Dec 11, 2004, https://www.swierenga.com/hgspap1204.html#_edn9 (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 109.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 109.

¹²¹ Larry B. Massie & Peter J. Schmidt, *Kalamazoo: The Place Behind the Products* (Staunton, VA: American History Press, 1998), 124.

¹²² Ibid.

neighborhood. The few celery barns which remain in the Edison neighborhood are strikingly Dutch inspired in their design with their gambrel roofs and half-timbering. Following the decline of the celery industry the Dutch transitioned to growing flowers. Much of this agricultural activity moved outside of downtown Kalamazoo, and other eastern European groups, as well as Hispanic and African American immigrants, settled in the Edison neighborhood as the Dutch population declined.

Many Latvian people immigrated to the United States during World War II and throughout the Soviet Union's occupation of Latvia. Between 1930 and 1940, the number of Latvian-born residents in Kalamazoo increased by a factor of 6 and this number continued to rise through the 1940s.¹²³ As for many immigrant communities, these Latvian immigrants gathered and created community through religious, cultural, and social organizations. The St. John Evangelical Lutheran Latvian Church was founded in 1949 at 1215 West Lovell Street near the current Western Michigan University campus.¹²⁴ In 1950, a second Latvian congregation had formed – the Kalamazoo Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church. This church was constructed near Portage and Rose Streets. In 1995, the two congregations merged. A new church is currently being constructed. There is a Latvian school and other cultural and social organizations still operating out of the Kalamazoo Latvian Hall on Cherry Hill Drive. It appears the majority of Latvian life occurred in northwest Kalamazoo adjacent to the current Western Michigan University, but intensive level study may reveal sites within the Edison neighborhood with Latvian significance.



Figure 83: Hungarian Reformed Church at 610 Mills, April 2021, KDG

Much of eastern European life in Edison was concentrated on Mills Street, which runs through the Edison neighborhood.¹²⁵

Both the Magyar Lutheran Church and the Hungarian Reformed Church are located on Mills Street. The Hungarian Reform Church congregation formed in 1914 and initially gathered in a house on Mills Street which they had purchased for \$900. In 1922, the

congregation built a house and purchased two adjacent lots on Mills Street for the growing congregation. This house, located at 610 Mills, and surrounding lots are labeled on the 1932

¹²³ "Kalamazoo's Latvian Community," *Museography*, Kalamazoo Valley Museum and Kalamazoo community College, Vol. 3 Issue 3 (Spring 2004) https://web.archive.org/web/20060902060303/http://kvm.kvcc.edu/content/generalinfo/museographies/Museography_IX.pdf (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹²⁴ "Congregation's History," About Us, Kalamazoo Latvians, kalamazoolatvians.com (accessed November 11, 2021); Janis Arvids Reinfelds, House of Representatives 83 Congress, 2nd Session, Report no. 2391, University of Michigan Law Library, Aug 2 1954.

¹²⁵ Sharon Ferraro, *Kalamazoo Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey*, Survey Report, 2001.

Sanborn Map as “Hungarian Settlement House.” In 1947, the congregation moved to a new church located at 803 Mills Street.¹²⁶ The church at 803 Mills is the current home of the Living the Word Christian Fellowship congregation, and the 610 Mills location is the current home to the Iglesia Resplandor de Gloria congregation. It is unclear if Living the Word has any association with the Hungarian Reformed Church.



Figure 84: Former Hungarian Reformed Church second location at 803 Mills, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

610 Mills Street – Original location of the Hungarian Reformed Church. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. The property may also be eligible under Criterion A for Ethnic History and Social History dependent upon further intensive level research. This property is also recommended as a contributing property within the proposed Mills Street Commercial Historic District.

803 Mills Street – The second church location for the Hungarian Reformed Church. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. The property may also be eligible under Criterion A for Ethnic History and Social History dependent upon further intensive level research.

¹²⁶ Hungarian Ref. Church of Kalamazoo, <http://www.hungariancatholicmission.com/faith/churches/other-us/mi-hungarianrefchurchofkalamazoo.pdf> (accessed November 21, 2021).

Hispanic Population

Spanish-speaking immigrants arrived in southwest Michigan in great numbers due to the Bracero Program in the 1940s, which allowed Mexican nationals to migrate to the United States for temporary work during World War II.¹²⁷ Many of these people stayed in the United States after the war concluded, and many continued to come for the farm work; many also took on other professions. The number of Hispanic people in Kalamazoo and southwestern Michigan is still growing. As of 2008, Kalamazoo's population was composed of 3 percent of people who identify as Hispanic compared to 1 percent in 1990.¹²⁸ The percentage of Hispanic identifying people residing in the Edison neighborhood is substantially higher than the City of Kalamazoo's percentage. Nineteen percent of Edison's population currently identifies as Hispanic.

Not only is there a thriving Hispanic population living in the Edison neighborhood, but there are also associated community services headquartered in Edison. El Concilio Kalamazoo, formerly



the Hispanic American Council, is located in the Edison neighborhood within St. Joseph's Catholic Church at 936 Lake Street. El Concilio is a non-profit community organization serving the Latinx community in Kalamazoo. There are also many Hispanic businesses in the Edison neighborhood, many of them concentrated along Portage Street in the proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District. These businesses include Los Brothers Mexican Food at 2015 Portage and Azteca Bakery at 1938 Portage, among others.

Figure 85: Los Brothers Mexican Food at 2015 Portage, April 2021, KDG

Representative Examples:

936 Lake Street – St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the location of El Concilio Kalamazoo. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended individually eligible under Criterion A for Ethnic History and Social History and under Criterion C for Architecture.

Proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District – The storefronts in this proposed district contain many Hispanic businesses which cater to Edison's Hispanic population. The proposed

¹²⁷ Kathy Jessup, "Kalamazoo has been both a boiling pot and a melting pot throughout its history," *MLive*, Jan 21, 2019.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

historic district is recommended eligible under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture.

African American Population

Kalamazoo's African American population grew steadily starting in the second half of the nineteenth century. Many Black settlers were attracted to Kalamazoo for the industrial and skilled craft jobs that were available. The first wave of the Great Migration was picking up in earnest in the early 1900s and "for the towns, especially Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, employment opportunities in service work or skilled crafts attracted those who were not devoted to agricultural labor. The number of Black residents in Kalamazoo grew gradually, from 361 in 1870 to 471 in 1900. By 1910 there were 790 Black residents in Kalamazoo County and 685 in the city."¹²⁹

Black residents historically settled in the Northside, Eastside, and Edison neighborhoods as it was almost impossible to gain housing elsewhere in the city because of discriminatory lending practices and housing segregation practices. The Northside also had an older, cheap housing stock originally constructed by Dutch settlers. Because of its age, this housing stock was less desirable and more accessible to Black settlers moving to Kalamazoo during the Great Migration. A 1937 Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC) map, colloquially known as a redlining map, indicates that much of the Edison neighborhood was ranked as "Third Grade" because of the high concentration of Black and minority families living in the neighborhood at the time. This low grade made it so that it was almost impossible to secure Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans in the neighborhood. Not being able to access FHA loans was incredibly damaging to the financial stability of Black and minority families as FHA loans made the payment terms accessible to working and middle class families: loans were available for up to 80% of the purchase price and had generous repayment terms (20 years).¹³⁰ Because neighborhoods shaded in red were too "risky" and thus ineligible for these loan products, the only way Black and minority families could purchase a home was via a full cash payment or, sometimes, by obtaining predatory loans with high interest rates and punitive repayment terms. This, of course, largely locked Black and minority families out of the most common mechanism for building inter-generational wealth—the appreciation and equity gained by homeownership. *De jure* segregation, including discriminatory lending practices, have had lasting effects on the demographics of Kalamazoo's neighborhoods. According to the American Community Survey of 2012-2015, the Edison neighborhood is composed of 55.07% people of color while the adjacent Milwood neighborhood is only 27.99% people of color.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Lewis Walker, *African Americans in Michigan* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 16.

¹³⁰ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2017), 64.

¹³¹ Mark Wedel, "Kalamazoo's Systemic Inequities in Housing and Efforts to Correct Them," *Second Wave Media*, June 18, 2020.

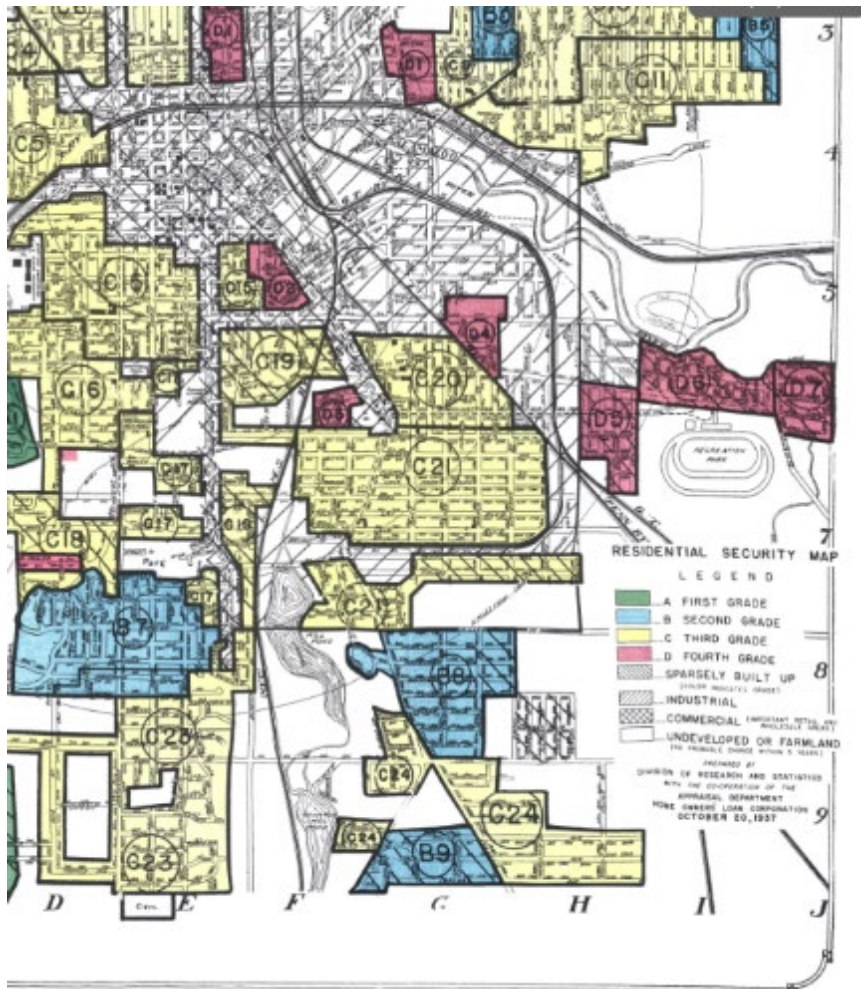


Figure 86: Home Owner's Loan Corporation Map, 1937, Western Michigan University

In addition to discrimination in housing, Black residents of Kalamazoo also faced segregation in the city's schools. The history of racism in Kalamazoo's public educational system is long and well documented. Even while Kalamazoo residents were in the Union army fighting to preserve the union and abolish slavery, the Board of Education in Kalamazoo established a segregated school for Black students in 1861.¹³² However, after a series of integration laws were passed and after the Michigan Supreme decision in *People ex rel. Joseph Workman v. Board of Education of Detroit* was handed down in 1869, the segregated schools were dissolved and Kalamazoo's

Black students were later transferred to the white school in 1872, ending school segregation in Kalamazoo.¹³³

Even though segregation in Kalamazoo's schools was formally ended in 1872, as mentioned above, redlining, exclusionary zoning, and real estate "steering" practices meant that many of Kalamazoo's neighborhoods remained segregated which, in turn, meant the city's schools remained largely segregated as well. This continued through much of the twentieth century. In 1970, African American students boycotted Kalamazoo Central High School because of institutional racism.¹³⁴ Kalamazoo was highly segregated at this time with the population of Kalamazoo Central High School being 16.9% African American while the city's other high

¹³² Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 95.

¹³³ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 95; Lynn Houghton, Regina Gorham, "Kalamazoo's Colored School (1861-1871), Kalamazoo Public Library, 2018, accessed 3/17/22, <https://www.kpl.gov/video/kalamazoos-colored-school-1861-1871/>.

¹³⁴ Matt D'Avanzo, "School District Segregation and its Impacts in Kalamazoo, MI," Loyola University Chicago School of Law, accessed 11/11/21, https://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/law/centers/childlaw/childled/pdfs/2011studentpapers/davanzo_desegregation.pdf

school, Kalamazoo Loy Norrix, was only 1.6% African American. Today, students in the Edison neighborhood attend Kalamazoo Loy Norris High School, which has a diverse student population representative of the overall neighborhood. Loy Norris High School has a current student body which is 43.6% white, 28.4% Black, 16.8% Hispanic, 9.2% Two or More Races, 1.5% Asian, 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.¹³⁵

Despite these issues, Black residents of Kalamazoo have preserved and have a long history of collaborating to form a rich cultural heritage that is evident in many of the existing social programs in the city. Because many of Kalamazoo's Black residents historically lived in the Northside neighborhood, most of the social and cultural life occurred in Northside rather than in Edison. One such example is the Douglass Community Association located at 1000 W Paterson Street. This association was founded just after World War I to provide a social club for the Black members of Camp Custer. The association was originally housed in the 3rd floor rooms on the 300 block of North Burdick Street. With a burgeoning membership, the group sought a larger meeting space and commissioned local architect Ernest Batterson to design a new community house. World War II ended before the building completed construction though, and the building was re-purposed as a community center for Kalamazoo's Black residents.¹³⁶ The Douglass Community Association



Figure 87: Douglass Community Center, 1941, Kalamazoo Public Library

(DCA) is still active with a mission to serve “individuals in the Northside neighborhood, as well as the greater Kalamazoo community as a center for social, recreational, and community development activities.”¹³⁷ Another association dedicated to Kalamazoo's Black population is S.H.A.R.E., the Society for History and Racial Equity. This society is also located outside of the Edison neighborhood at 471 W. South Street.

Recently there has been a significant effort to revitalize the Washington Square commercial corridor, which has resulted in several new Black owned businesses opening in Edison. These

¹³⁵ Loy Norrix High School, *U.S. News and World Report*, <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/michigan/districts/kalamazoo-public-schools/loy-norrix-high-school-10051> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹³⁶ Douglass Community Association, Kalamazoo Public Library, <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/neighborhoods/douglass-community-association-2/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹³⁷ Douglass Community Association, Our History, <https://www.dcakalamazoo.com/about/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

businesses include Twine the Urban Winery, Michigan’s first Black female-owned winery, as well as Ty’s Joint and Layla’s Cool Pops. The building at 1301-1319 Portage Street was purchased in the summer of 2021 by Black Wall Street Kalamazoo.¹³⁸ Black Wall Street Kalamazoo is an organization dedicated to “create an inspired community and bring forth successful African American businesses and increase the self-esteem of the African American family and culture.”¹³⁹ Black Wall Street Kalamazoo intends to use the property in a way which is most beneficial to minority business owners and to support Black entrepreneurs.¹⁴⁰

Representative Examples:

1301-1319 Portage Street – Currently owned by Black Wall Street Kalamazoo and home to multiple Black-owned businesses. This property is recommended as a contributing property to the proposed Washington Square Commercial Historic District as well as individually eligible under Criterion A for Commerce and under Criterion C for Architecture.

Entertainment/Recreation

The origin of the Edison neighborhood begins with the development that occurred around the National Driving Park—see “Community Planning and Development” section for more details—which was situated in the middle of what is now present-day Edison. In the middle decades of the 1800s, Kalamazoo residents flocked to the National Driving Park and the businesses that sprung up around it to watch horse racing, circuses, fairs, and traveling shows. Edison’s proximity to downtown Kalamazoo undoubtedly had a role in the development of the area, but the entertainment and recreational activities that took place in Edison was also a key reason this area was developed as the city grew.

Horse Racing and Fairs

In the latter half of the nineteenth century Kalamazoo was an epicenter of horse racing, specifically trotting races, with the top equine athletes competing at the Axtell track (founded in 1838 and located south of Lovell Street and west of Burdick)¹⁴¹ and the newer National Driving Park (located in the present-day Edison neighborhood) through the middle and late decades of the century. The Kalamazoo Jockey Club was formed in 1837. The National Driving Park was located at the south end of Washington Street, just east of Portage Street. The first horse races

¹³⁸ Brad Devereaux, “Black Wall Street among owners of revitalized Washington Square properties,” *MLive*, June 01, 2021.

¹³⁹ Black Wall Street Kalamazoo, <https://blackwallstreetkalamazoo.org/gd-info/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁴⁰ Brad Devereaux, “Black Wall Street,” *MLive*, June 01, 2021.

¹⁴¹ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 48.

were held at the National Driving Park in 1858.¹⁴² It would thrive and provide entertainment to thousands of Kalamazoo residents until closing in the 1880s.¹⁴³

Despite the closure of the National Driving Park, harness racing was still very popular in Kalamazoo into the 1890s and early 1900s. In 1895, a horse named Peter the Great was born in Kalamazoo to the prominent businessman Daniel Streeter. Peter the Great would go on to win the Kentucky Futurity, setting new track records in the process. After retiring, Peter the Great became a prolific stallion, siring over 500 trotters and was foundational to the relatively new Standardbred breed. “From the earliest times...there was keen interest in horse racing in Kalamazoo. In the gilded age, almost every family with means prided itself upon its stable of fine road horses and riding horses. As late as 1909, the city council authorize the closing of South Burdick Street from Burr Oak to South Street at certain times during the winter for racing horses in the snow.”¹⁴⁴ The last horse race at the National Driving Park occurred in 1886.

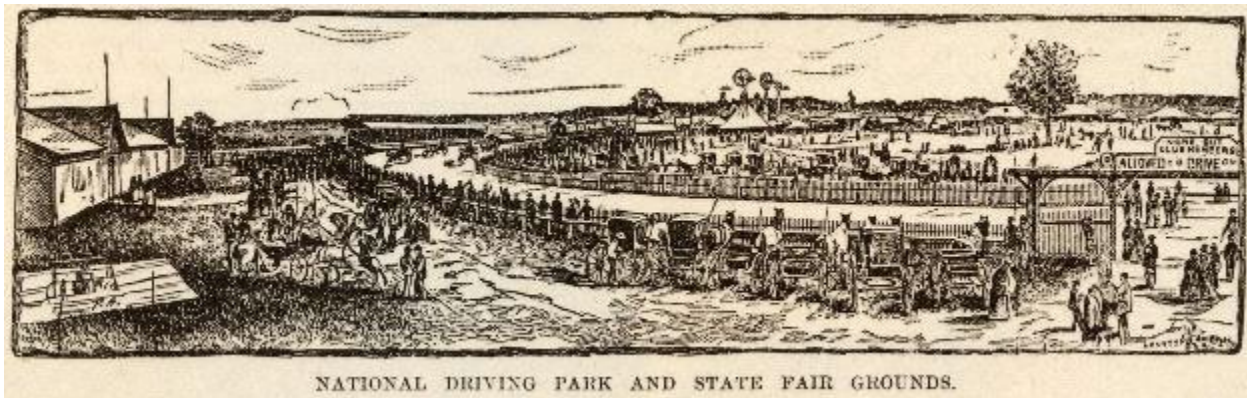


Figure 88: National Driving Park, 1887, Kalamazoo Public Library

When Charles B. Hays purchased the National Driving Park around the turn of the century the grounds were then used for circuses and other performances including Annie Oakley’s shooting exhibition and Buffalo Bill and his Wild West show. When Hays subdivided the National Driving Park for residential development in 1902, a new track was built east of the city called Recreation Park.¹⁴⁵ Horse racing continued at Recreation Park at least into the 1920s.

County fairs were organized by the Kalamazoo Agricultural Society (which had formed in 1845) starting in 1846.¹⁴⁶ The fairs had agricultural and livestock components and were popular forms of entertainment. These fairs continued to run until 1861, when they were halted due to the outbreak of the Civil War.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 84.

¹⁴³ Alex Florist, “National Driving Park,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2005 <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/recreation/national-driving-park/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁴⁴ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 141.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 84.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 84.

Representative Examples:

Proposed Hays Park / South Park Historic District – Much of the proposed Hays Park / South Park Historic District occupies the location where the National Driving Park used to be located. The proposed historic district is recommended eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C for Architecture.

Theaters

Kalamazoo had many historic theaters including the Bijou, the Capitol, the Civic, the State Theatre, and the Elite, but these venues were primarily located in downtown Kalamazoo outside the bounds of the Edison neighborhood. This changed when, in 1913, the Acadia Theater was opened in Washington Square, which was the commercial heart of the Edison neighborhood. Designed by local architect Rockwell A. Leroy, the one-story building sat 280 patrons and was initially built for “family theater,” with films of only “the cleanest character” according to an article in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*.¹⁴⁸ In 1922, the theater was severely damaged by fire, and, when the building was rebuilt, it was reconstructed as several retail shops.¹⁴⁹ Early tenants included a barber shop and a haberdashery. The distinctive stepped parapet of the Acadia Theater is still visible today on the building.



Figure 89: B.M. Barber's Department Store in former location of the Acadia Theatre, 1938, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro

¹⁴⁸ Keith Howard, “Acadia Theatre: ‘South Side’ Suburban Theater 1913-1922,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2019. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/arts-entertainment/acadia-theatre/>

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

Representative Examples:

1310 Portage Street – Storefront/former Acadia Theater. This property is recommended as a contributing property in the proposed Washington Square Historic District.

Parks

There are several substantial municipal parks located in the Edison neighborhood including the Upjohn Playground and Park located just west of Walter Street in the northwest portion of the Edison neighborhood and the Mayors Riverfront Park at the northern edge of the neighborhood. Additionally, there are several smaller parks and playgrounds located across the Edison neighborhood. These are briefly discussed below.

Located next to Portage Creek at the intersection of Lake and Walter Streets, the Upjohn Playground and Park contains the historically significant Nicholas Kik pool house, a large playground, a skatepark, a tennis court, and large open fields for athletics. The 1908 Sanborn shows that the area around modern-day Upjohn Park was used as a celery field. The park was originally created after a gift of land from then Mayor Dr. William E. Upjohn in 1919. Upjohn donated three additional land parcels in the 1920s. Over the course of its existence the park has served as athletic fields for the City's schools and housed the Helen Coover Center, the Community Access Center, and the Youth Development Center.¹⁵⁰ Built in 1971, the Nicholas Kik Pool House and Pool is a centerpiece of the park. The building exhibits a Modern design with Brutalist inspired design elements such as a precast concrete tee roof structure. The building is a local landmark in the Edison neighborhood and was recently painted with a bright mural by local Kalamazoo residents commissioned by the City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Department.



Figure 90: Nicholas Kik Pool House, April 2021, KDG

¹⁵⁰ Urschel, *City of Kalamazoo Parks*, 37.

The Mayors Riverfront Park is located at the very northern edge of the Edison neighborhood, sitting just south of the Kalamazoo River and just north of Kings Highway, stretching from East Michigan Avenue to Walnut Street to the south. This large municipal park includes the Soisson-Rapacz baseball field, a football field, and the Red Arrow golf course along with a playground and an open field used for community events and activities. The city began acquiring property along the banks of the Kalamazoo in 1885 in order to conduct improvements to the shore and adjacent land.¹⁵¹ In the late 1800s and early 1900s the land along the Kalamazoo River was used as a dumping grounds and was home to groups of itinerant people who camped on the river's banks."¹⁵² After acquiring more land from Moses Lane and Frank Lay, the park was later named Riverfront Park in the 1920s. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) built the football field at the Riverfront Park and the nearby course at the Red Arrow Golf Course.¹⁵³ In 2000, the park was renamed the Mayors' Riverfront Park to honor all the present and past mayors of Kalamazoo.¹⁵⁴

The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) fielded a team based in Kalamazoo called the Lassies, who were initially based at Lindstrom field (located on the west side of Portage Street just north of Lovers Lane) from 1950-1954.¹⁵⁵ Lindstrom field was located just south of the modern-day bounds of the Edison neighborhood. Later, the Lassies moved their games to the field at the Mayors Riverfront Park (it was known as CAA field when the Lassies played there although now it is called Soisson-Rapacz-Clason field).¹⁵⁶

Although the infrastructure of the field that the Lassies played on appears to be altered or entirely gone, the AAGPBL history is an important component of this park as "The Lassies were one of the more popular teams in the AAGPBL routinely drawing crowds of over 1,000."¹⁵⁷ The very last AAGPBL game ever played occurred on September 6, 1954, when the Lassies beat the Fort Wayne Daisies 8-5. The Mayors Riverfront Park is also home to the Homer Stryker field, which is a 5,500-seat baseball stadium that houses the Kalamazoo Growlers, a summer collegiate league team. Opened in 1963, the stadium has been home to two prior Frontier League teams, the Kalamazoo Kodiaks and the Kalamazoo Kings.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Urschel, *City of Kalamazoo Parks*, 34.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵⁵ Keith Howard, "Baseball Fields in Kalamazoo," Kalamazoo Public Library, 2013. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/recreation/baseball-fields-in-kalamazoo/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁵⁶ "Growlers to Honor Legendary Kalamazoo Lassies Friday Night," wrkr.com, <https://wrkr.com/232527/> (accessed Oct 15, 2021).

¹⁵⁷ Alex Forist, "The Kalamazoo Lassies (1950-1954)," Kalamazoo Public Library, 2005 <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/women/kalamazoo-lassies-2/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁵⁸ "Homer Stryker Field," Kalamazoo Growlers, <https://northwoodsleague.com/kalamazoo-growlers/team/ballpark> (accessed November 11, 2021).



Figure 91: Kalamazoo Lassies playing on the CAA field at Mayor's Riverfront Park, Undated, Kalamazoo Public Library

Directly north of the Mayors Riverfront Park is the public Red Arrow Golf Course. Both the Mayors Riverfront Park and the Red Arrow Golf Course were “a dump in 1885 when the City acquired land for river improvements.”¹⁵⁹ Additional land was acquired when LeRoy Hornbeck donated 10 acres along the Kalamazoo River to the city for a golf course in 1924.¹⁶⁰ With the land secured, the WPA and the City of Kalamazoo then created the nine-hole golf course in 1937 during the Great Depression, built with WPA labor.¹⁶¹ The course was later lengthened and improved in 1945.

Several smaller parks dot the landscape in the Edison neighborhood including Hays Park on the southeast side of the neighborhood, Reed Park near the center of the neighborhood, and the Southside playground in the center south of the neighborhood. A very small pocket park, called Edison Park, has a small play structure and is located at 1310 and 1314 Hays Park Avenue.

Hays Park is located at 2001 Miller Road at the corner of Factory Street and Miller Road. Located at the eastern bounds of the Edison neighborhood, this park is just over ten acres and contains a sizable stand of old growth beech and maple trees. The land was acquired in 1918 from George Davis, while the park itself was named after the former mayor and significant real estate developer Charles B. Hays.¹⁶² Before World War II, the City constructed softball diamonds while after the war low grade apartments were built in the park to house returning veterans. These apartments were later demolished, and the park was saved by a cooperative

¹⁵⁹ Urschel, *City of Kalamazoo Parks*, 36.

¹⁶⁰ Sharon Ferraro, *Kalamazoo Reconnaissance Level Historic Resources Survey*, 2001, 5.

¹⁶¹ “About KMGGA,” Kalamazoo Municipal Golf Association, <https://kmgagolf.com/about/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁶² Urschel, *City of Kalamazoo Parks*, 38.

effort with local citizens, Western Michigan University, and the National Audubon Society joining forces to oppose the proposed sale to the National Waterlift plant nearby.¹⁶³

Located at the corner of Reed Avenue and Portage Street, Reed Park is the former location of Charles B. Hay's personal residence. Reed Park was a popular location for ice cream socials in the 1930s and 1940s. The granite rock in the middle of the park was dedicated to the Grand Army of the Republic, which was a Union veterans' organization.¹⁶⁴

The Southside Playground is located at 2100 Race Street and is often referred to as Peter Pan Park. Located at the northeast corner of the Race Street and Palmer Avenue, the park has a small walking path and playground equipment in the center. Purchased from the American Cyanamid Corporation, the property was developed into a park by the City and the WPA in 1940.¹⁶⁵ American Cyanamid Corporation manufactured paper making chemicals and owned the factory directly north of the park at 2006 Race Street. At 5.833 acres, the Southside Playground was developed at a cost of \$65,000 and opened in the fall of 1940.¹⁶⁶

Representative Examples:

1018 Walter Street – Upjohn Playground and Park (Kik Pool). Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this park and associated pool house are recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Social History and under Criterion C for Architecture.

251 Mills Street – Mayors Riverfront Park (Homer Stryker Field & Soisson-Rapacz-Clason Field). Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this park is recommended as not eligible. None of the baseball-specific architecture from the park's era of significance are still extant. The current built features in the park do not meet the age requirement for listing in the National Register.

1041 King Highway – Red Arrow Golf Course. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, the Red Arrow Golf Course is recommended individually eligible under Criterion A for Entertainment/Recreation and Social History and under Criterion C for Landscape Architecture.

2100 Race Street – Southside Playground. Eligible. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, Southside Playground is not recommended as individually eligible. The property does not appear to meet the threshold for significance.

2001 Miller Road – Hays Park. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, Hays Park is recommended as a contributing resource to the proposed South Edison Historic District.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 38.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 40.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 42.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 42

1700 Portage Street – Reed Park. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, Reed Park is recommended as a contributing resource to the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District.

Commerce

The Edison neighborhood has a long history of commercial activity with multiple historic commercial corridors existing throughout the neighborhood. It is evident that early town planners had intentions of commercial activity spreading south into what is now the Edison neighborhood as early as 1834 as early maps show Portage Street as the main road running south from the downtown area.¹⁶⁷ Portage Street would become the prime commercial corridor in the Edison neighborhood. Because of this main commercial artery and Edison's strategic position near the railroad, the Kalamazoo River, and Portage Creek, it became a hotbed for industrial activity. Commercial buildings were not erected until 1905.¹⁶⁸

The earliest commercial buildings in the Edison neighborhood are in Washington Square at the intersection of Portage Street and Washington Avenue. Many of these c. 1900 era buildings were simple wood frame structures and are no longer extant. The largest of these early commercial buildings was the Foy Block building at 1336 Portage, a three-part commercial block building. The Foy Block and the building next to it, the Dore Building at 1327 Portage, both housed retail on the ground floor with residential on the upper floors. Washington Square saw commercial growth through the 1920s. The handsome Art Deco style building at 1301-1319 Portage was erected in the 1920s as were the Ernest Wise and B.M. Barber buildings which sit across the street at 1310 Portage. These buildings hosted a variety of businesses including drug stores, restaurants, medical offices, and the Arcadia Theater.



Figure 92: Washington Square, 1900, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro

¹⁶⁷ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 41.

¹⁶⁸ Sharon Ferraro, *Washington Square Draft National Register Nomination*, 2005.

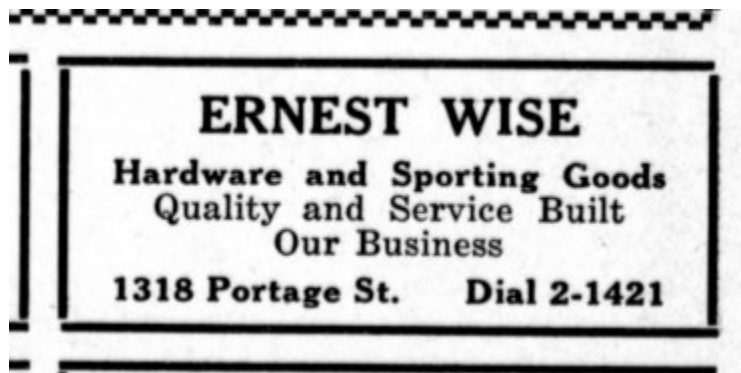


Figure 93: Ad for Ernest Wise, *Augustinian Newspaper* May 25, 1929, CMU Digital Michigan Newspapers

Washington Square thrived through the 1920s and 1930s and functioned as a lively commercial corridor as well as a hub for socialization and gathering in the Edison neighborhood. Washington Square had its own business association, a newsletter titled *The South Side News*, and at one point an ‘unofficial mayor,’ Ainsworth Green.¹⁶⁹ By the 1950s, the Washington Square storefronts began to lose business to the large shopping malls and shopping centers being erected in the city and in neighboring towns. Many of the businesses closed, and some storefronts became host to adult themed businesses in the 1970s, which attracted a different sort of crowd than the bustling commercial corridor once had.

In recent years Washington Square has seen a resurgence with a number of new businesses moving into historic buildings including Twine Urban Winery, Ty’s Joint, and Layla’s Cool Pops, among others. Black Wall Street Kalamazoo recently purchased the building at 1301-1319 Portage and, as previously noted, is dedicated to supporting Black business owners and entrepreneurs in succeeding and thriving in Washington Square.



Figure 94: Washington Square, 1960, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro



Figure 95: Washington Square, 1990, Courtesy of Sharon Ferraro

¹⁶⁹ Sharon Ferraro, *Washington Square Draft National Register Nomination*, 2005.

This reconnaissance level survey has identified three other historic commercial corridors in the neighborhood: South Burdick Street, South Portage Street, and Mills Street. These locations have a significant amount of intact commercial historic fabric from varying periods in history.

There is a small, intact collection of commercial buildings on S. Burdick Street between Reed and Emerson, many of which date to the late 1800s. These buildings tend to be Italianate in style and clad in wood siding. The 1908 Sanborn Map indicates this commercial corridor contained a shoe store, grocery store, and a drug store. The corridor appears to still be thriving in the 1958 Sanborn Map. One of the stores is labeled as a 'paint & wall paper' store. By 1958, additional storefronts were created by constructing one-story rectangular structures on the front of the few residential dwellings on the street, thus creating hybrid commercial/residential buildings. While many of these storefronts appeared to be vacant at the time of this reconnaissance survey there are some active businesses. These include the La Hispanica International Market at 1805 S. Burdick and Richards South Side Upholstery at 1723 S. Burdick.



Figure 96: S. Burdick commercial buildings, 1908 Sanborn Map



Figure 97: Example of a commercial storefront addition to a residential building, 1805 S. Burdick, April 2021, KDG

The commercial buildings along South Portage Street are a collection of Art Deco era buildings between E. Alcott and Palmer Avenue. These buildings are architecturally cohesive with stepped parapets and geometrically inspired brick detailing. These buildings are next to the former location of both the Imperial Coating Division factory and the Bryant Paper Mill. It is very probable that this commercial corridor developed out of a need to provide commercial services for the employees of these two large factories. The 1923 Sanborn Map indicates these storefronts housed a drugstore, restaurant, and a filling station while a large complex at Portage and Palmer Avenue served as the location of a bakery and doughnut factory. It appears this bakery and doughnut factory has been heavily modified; it is the current location of the Aunt Millie's Bread Factory. Currently, some of the South Portage Street storefronts are empty while the historic filling station is now a Furr Auto Service; other storefronts are occupied by Los Brothers Mexican Food and La Azteca Bakery. One of the commercial buildings is currently a church, the Center for Jesus Christ Believers.

The commercial buildings on Mills Street are early- to mid-twentieth century commercial storefronts located along Mills near Fourth Street and East Crosstown Parkway. At the center of this commercial district is the c. 1920 Hungarian Reformed Church. The 1932 Sanborn map also shows various other commercial shops, a filling station, and an apartment flat building. By 1958, the corridor had developed further. The apartment flat building is shown with a commercial store addition, and other store buildings have been built including a 'radio & TV supplier' and a 'radio

repair' shop. Few of the commercial storefronts along Mills Street were occupied at the time of the reconnaissance survey.



Figure 98: Commercial buildings along south Portage Street, 1932 Sanborn Map

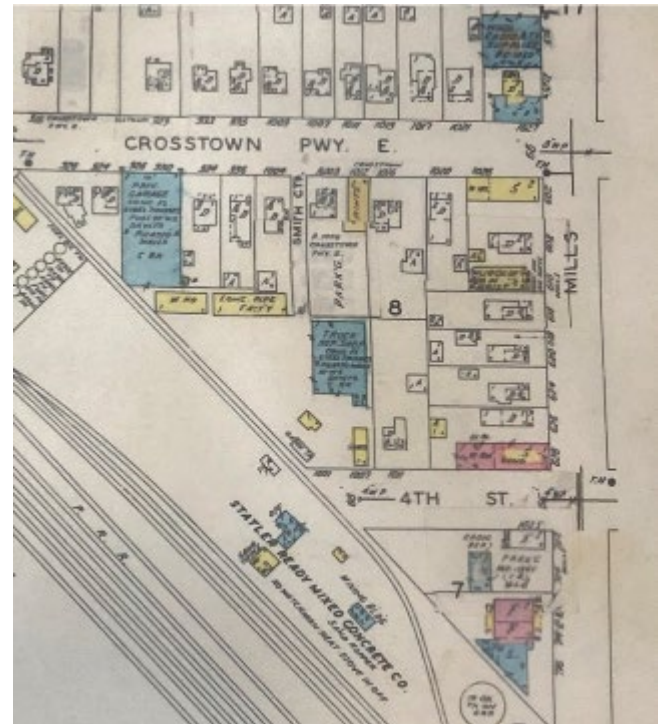


Figure 99: Commercial buildings along Mills Street between 4th St and E. Crosstown Pkwy, 1958 Sanborn Map

Representative Examples:

Proposed Washington Square Commercial Historic District—This proposed district is likely significant under Criterion A for Commerce as it is a fine collection of commercial and municipal buildings which served as a center for civic and commercial activity in the Edison neighborhood in the early and mid-1900s. This district is also recommended as significant under Criterion A for Social History as the historic library branch and the fire hall station showcase the civic infrastructure built in the area to promote the overall welfare of the Edison community. Finally, this district is recommended as significant under Criterion C for Architecture as it contains intact examples of small and medium scale commercial and civic architecture.

Proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District—The proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District is a collection of Art Deco era early twentieth century commercial buildings. The proposed district is recommended eligible under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture. The buildings are indicative of the role Portage Street played as a lively commercial corridor in the early to mid-1900's due to the rapid growth of the Edison neighborhood and the proximity to nearby industry such as the Bryant Paper Mill and the Imperial Coating Co.

Proposed Mills Street Commercial Historic District—The proposed district is recommended as eligible under Criterion A for Commerce, Ethnic History, and Religion. The proposed district is

also significant under Criterion C for Architecture as the commercial structures constitute a fine example of early and mid-twentieth century commercial architecture including Art Deco, Modern, and Carpenter Gothic.

Proposed South Burdick Commercial Historic District—This proposed district is recommended as eligible under Criterion A for Commerce due to the area’s role in cultivating a commercial core along South Burdick in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This proposed district is also recommended as eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. There are several intact examples of small-scale, storefront style commercial architecture and small commercial shops added onto residential dwellings that are still extant in the proposed district.

Education

The earliest organized education in Kalamazoo came in the form of a one room schoolhouse located on South Street between Burdick and Henrietta.¹⁷⁰ Built in 1833, the school is located outside the bounds of the Edison neighborhood, but the early construction of a school—Titus Bronson, Kalamazoo’s first settler, had only built the settlement’s first dwelling just two years prior in 1831¹⁷¹—illustrates that education must have been valued by the early residents. Just a few years later, in 1837, as the population of the town increased, “...the town had grown so much that a second school district was formed, and a second school started in a building on East Main Street. A third district was formed in 1846, and brick schoolhouse costing \$606.80 was constructed.”¹⁷² The school population continued to climb with total students going from 368 in 1850 to 925 in 1853.¹⁷³ These students were spread across several small school buildings in the fledgling town.

Primary and Secondary Education

As Kalamazoo grew, it began to reorganize its school system to better meet the needs of the growing town. Kalamazoo hoped to consolidate all students into one “Union School,” but local disagreements as to the location prevented it until the state legislature passed a law in 1859 that allowed the school trustees to choose a location if voters couldn’t agree. This law also allowed the local school boards to fund schools by local taxes so long as the local residents voted in favor of the taxes. “In anticipation of the legislature’s passage of the law, but without a vote of local citizens, Kalamazoo established its first high school in 1858.”¹⁷⁴ Although located outside the Edison neighborhood, the first high school was known as the Kalamazoo Union High School. In 1873, local residents filed suit against city in order to prevent the high school from being funded

¹⁷⁰ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 44.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷² Ibid., 77.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 77.

¹⁷⁴ Elizabeth Timmerman, “The Kalamazoo School Case: Supporting High School Education,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2000. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/rural-schools/the-kalamazoo-school-case-supporting-high-school-education/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

by taxpayers. In a landmark case, Justice Thomas M. Cooley Michigan Supreme Court ruled that taxes collected were not solely allocated for elementary schools but could be used for funding high schools too. This case would change the American educational landscape by validating the practice of establishing taxpayer funded Kindergarten through 12th grade schools—the educational model still in use today.

The Edison neighborhood has two public schools within its bounds: the school known historically as the Lake Street School or the Edison School (known now as the Edison Environmental Science Academy) and the Portage Street School (known now as the Washington Writers Academy). Both schools housed multiple grades early in their history although most



Figure 100: Edison Environmental Science Academy at 924 Russell St, April 2021, KDG

recently both the Edison Environmental Academy and the Washington Writers Academy housed elementary students.

There has long been a school on Lake Street in Edison as maps from 1861 and 1873 both show a school in this general location.¹⁷⁵ The current school on Lake Street was built in 1923 at the corner of Lake and Russell Streets, just east of the where the original Lake Street schoolhouse was located on 1861 and 1873 maps.¹⁷⁶

Initially known as the Lake Street School, it was renamed in 1931 following a parent petition presented to the board of education.¹⁷⁷ The school was re-christened as the Thomas A. Edison School that same year. Later it was called the Thomas Edison Elementary School before finally landing on the name Edison Environmental Academy. At some time in the mid-twentieth century the school received a large one-story addition on the north side.

It is likely that the name changed to Thomas A. Edison Elementary was a determining factor in the neighborhood at large adopting the Edison epitaph. Nonetheless, this is one of the first, if not the first, documented instance of the term Edison used in association with something in the

¹⁷⁵ *Map of Kalamazoo County*, Geil & Harley, Philadelphia, PA (1861); *Atlas of Kalamazoo County*, F.W. Beers & Co, New York, NY (1873).

¹⁷⁶ During the field survey portion of this project the Edison Environmental Academy and the Boys and Girls Club of Kalamazoo were still standing, and survey inventory forms were completed for these buildings. In August of 2021, after fieldwork had concluded, these buildings were demolished.

¹⁷⁷ “Lake Street School Renamed in Honor of Inventor, Thos. A. Edison”, *The Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 3, 1931.

neighborhood. The Edison Environmental Science Academy was documented in this survey, and a survey inventory form was produced for it; however, the school was demolished in August of 2021 shortly after fieldwork for this survey concluded. A new elementary school is planned for the now-vacant parcel, projected to be completed in 2023.



Figure 101: Washington Writer's Academy at 1919 Portage St, March 2021, KDG

As mentioned above, the other main school that has long served the Edison neighborhood is the Portage Street School, located at Portage Street and Lay Boulevard. The first school built on Portage Street was constructed in 1907.¹⁷⁸ Built of red brick and sandstone the Portage Street School was three stories high and had twelve classrooms and housed kindergarten through ninth grade students.¹⁷⁹ A library branch was opened in the basement in 1919—library services later relocated to their permanent home, the Washington Square Library,

further north on Portage Street. The population had grown so substantially that in 1920 a gymnasium addition was added to the Portage Street School.¹⁸⁰

By 1920, both Lake Street and Portage Street Schools had many more students than both could handle. Voters approved the funds needed to build a new three-story building facing Lay Boulevard. The local architectural firm, Billingham and Cobb received the contract for the design. Completed in 1922, it held twelve classrooms along with rooms for art, music, literature and penmanship in addition to another 600-seat auditorium and another gymnasium. This Collegiate Gothic structure had crenellations at the roof, multiple double-hung windows and two impressive arched entrances. All elementary grades moved to this building while the junior high students stayed in the original structure. In 1923, the Portage Street Parent-Teacher Association requested the name of the school change to Washington for both the Elementary and Junior High Schools.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 147.

¹⁷⁹ Lynn Houghton, "Washington Elementary School: Kalamazoo Public Schools," Kalamazoo Public Library, 2021. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/kps/washington-elementary-school/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Lynn Houghton, "Washington Elementary School: Kalamazoo Public Schools," Kalamazoo Public Library, 2021. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/kps/washington-elementary-school/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

The district continued to grow with huge increases throughout the 1940s and 1950s—school age children under the age of five numbered 3,889 in 1939, 4,818 in 1945 and 6,623 by 1950.¹⁸² By 1950, the continued population growth meant that all junior high students were moved from the Portage Street School/Washington Junior High to a nearby school. In 1963, the original 1907 school building was torn down due to fire safety concerns. In 1999 the school was renamed the Washington Writers Academy. Later, in 2013, the building from 1922 was razed to make way for a new building. Today, the current iteration of the Washington Writers Academy was completed in 2015, and no historic buildings remain on the site.¹⁸³

Today, most students in the Edison neighborhood are routed to Milwood Middle School although some students in the north are routed to Maple Street Middle School—both middle schools, and the high school attended by Edison children, are located outside the bounds of the Edison neighborhood. Kalamazoo has two high schools, Central High School and Loy Norrix High School. Students who live in the Edison neighborhood are routed to the Loy Norrix High School which is located just south of Milham Park. Kalamazoo’s early commitment to education has continued through to the present day as the Kalamazoo Promise was unveiled at a school board meeting in 2005. Funded by a group of anonymous donors, the Kalamazoo Promise funds four years of college education for graduates of the Kalamazoo Public School system.

Although no colleges are located in the Edison neighborhood, Kalamazoo has a long history as a center for collegiate education. The Michigan and Huron Institute was granted a charter in 1833—it was briefly known as the Kalamazoo Library Institute and as a branch of the University of Michigan before adopting its current name Kalamazoo College in the mid-1850s.¹⁸⁴ Located just north of Edison, the Michigan Female Seminary was opened in the mid-1800s and closed in 1907.¹⁸⁵ Kalamazoo is also home to Western Michigan University, which was founded in 1903 and originally known as the Western State Normal School. Nazareth College was founded in 1922 and built a substantial campus northeast of the city—it closed in 1992.¹⁸⁶ Although these institutions are all located outside the bounds of the Edison neighborhood, they speak to the importance of education to citizens of Kalamazoo and these schools helped shape the identity of Kalamazoo as a regional hub for advanced study.

¹⁸² Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 200.

¹⁸³ Lynn Houghton, “Washington Elementary School: Kalamazoo Public Schools,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2021. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/kps/washington-elementary-school/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁸⁴ Alex Forist, “Kalamazoo College: Founded in 1833,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2005.

<https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/education/kalamazoo-college/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁸⁵ Martha Lohrstorfer, “Michigan Female Seminary: Education for Women,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 1999. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/women/michigan-female-seminary> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁸⁶ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 174; Lindsay Moore, “Demolition begins on former Nazareth College campus in Kalamazoo,” *MLive*, Oct 25, 2019.

<https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/2019/10/demolition-begins-on-former-nazareth-college-campus-in-kalamazoo.html> (accessed November 11, 2021).

Representative Examples:

1919 Portage Street – Washington Writers Academy. This building is recommended as non-contributing to the proposed Hays Park / South Park Historic District as it is under 40 years of age.

924 Lake Street – Lake Street School/Edison Environmental Academy/Boys and Girls Club. This building is not eligible as it was demolished during the course of this reconnaissance level survey.

Transportation

Early transportation in Kalamazoo was accomplished with carts, wagons, and buggies. Travel to Kalamazoo in the years before the railroad involved utilizing the Territorial Road, which roughly followed old Native American trails. The road was very rough in the early years of wagon travel, but it was slowly improved through the 1830s enough that a stagecoach line was added to connect Kalamazoo with St. Joseph, Michigan.¹⁸⁷ Later, plank roads were built which further facilitated travel into Kalamazoo.

To provide better surfaces for the buggies and carts, some streets in Kalamazoo were paved with bricks; these are still extant on Vine Street in the northern section of the Edison neighborhood. Kalamazoo was a regional center for buggy manufacturing as is discussed in further detail in the “Industry” section, above. The Burrell Wagon Company was founded in Kalamazoo in 1837, while the Cornell Wagon company was organized in 1848.¹⁸⁸ The Kalamazoo Wagon Company was founded in 1881 but was not located in the Edison neighborhood.¹⁸⁹ These manufacturers provided the primary means of private transportation before the automobile was invented.

By the mid-1840s, the Michigan Central Railroad was building railroad track from the east. It finally reached Kalamazoo in 1844, connecting Kalamazoo with the more populated areas in the east of the state.¹⁹⁰ A second “feeder” line was installed between Three Rivers, Michigan and Kalamazoo in 1866.¹⁹¹ The railroad’s arrival helped spur the growth of Kalamazoo with double digit population gains from 1850 through 1910. The Kalamazoo Railway Supply Company was located at 1827 Reed Avenue and produced rail trucks and ancillary railway equipment; however, the factory on Reed was demolished sometime after 2012 (see “Industry” section for more details). With the rise of the automobile the railroad industry became increasingly less significant to the overall passenger movement from and to Kalamazoo. Today, Amtrak still provides passenger service to Kalamazoo, and the historic station (located north of the Edison

¹⁸⁷ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 56

¹⁸⁸ Ethel Balls and Marie Lassfolk, *Living in Kalamazoo* (Kalamazoo: The Board of Education of the City of Kalamazoo, 1958), 10.

¹⁸⁹ *Myers v. Kalamazoo Buggy Co.*, 54 Mich 215 (1884).

¹⁹⁰ “First Train in Kazoo Village,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, Jan. 2, 1906.

¹⁹¹ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 98.



Figure 102: Kalamazoo city buses, c. 1936, Kalamazoo Public Library

district) is still used. It is the architectural centerpiece in the newly revamped Kalamazoo Transportation Center. Although passenger rail travel has decreased since its heyday, the rail lines are still busy in Kalamazoo with frequent trains carrying cargo and shipping containers.

In 1885, the first horse drawn streetcar began service in the City of Kalamazoo. The streetcars ran through Edison and there was a large maintenance barn located at 1301 Cameron Street. By 1893, the system was

electrified, and it ran until 1932.¹⁹² Pay disputes and strikes signaled the death knell for the streetcars, which were discontinued in 1932 and replaced with buses. The large streetcar maintenance barn, one of the last remaining structures in Edison connected to the streetcar system, was demolished in 2018. The cars would have approached the maintenance barn on Cameron from Washington Street, and this is why Washington Street is wider than other nearby streets. Beyond the width of Washington Street, which is still evident, one other remnant of the streetcar system is still evident on Byrant Street—the street curves northward with a fairly wide radius (to accommodate the streetcars) as the old streetcar line ran down Fulford, then followed the curve southwest from Fulford to Bryant Street. Today, the curves on Fulford and Bryant Streets remain as one of the few tangible pieces of evidence of the history of the streetcars in Edison.

City buses replaced the streetcars after they ceased running in 1932¹⁹³—buses are still a common sight in the neighborhood. The private bus company Kalamazoo City Lines was acquired by Kalamazoo Metro Transit in 1967. Today buses service the Kalamazoo Metro Transit routes, which run through the city proper and in neighboring communities.

The first automobile was shipped to Kalamazoo to a George A. Taylor in 1900, and, in the following years, automobiles supplanted trains, streetcars, and horse-drawn vehicles as the dominant mode of transportation.¹⁹⁴ In the first two decades of the twentieth century, filling

¹⁹² Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 166.

¹⁹³ “Year Marks End of Street Cars for Kalamazoo,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 2, 1933.

¹⁹⁴ “First Automobile Owned in City Shipped Here in Crate to George A. Taylor, Jan 24. 1900,” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, December 1930.

station and auto garages popped up all over the city. A comparison of the Sanborn maps from 1908 and 1932 shows how the infrastructure of the city changed to provide service to the new vehicles. By 1932, busy corners in the Edison neighborhood were dotted with automobile garages and filling stations including one at the corner of Portage Street and 2nd Avenue, one at the corner of Portage and Harrigan Street, one at the corner of Mills and Lake Streets, one at Portage and Bryant, and one at Portage and Lake.

Of the old filling stations found during this survey, two are listed below as notable locations. The filling station at 1104 Portage is an excellent example of Streamline Moderne style while the filling station at 1014 Mills (note the building has a 1029 address number displayed prominently on the building) is an older style with a brick porte cochere attached to a small brick service building.

Representative Locations:

1104 Portage Street – Historic Garage and Filling Station. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture.

1014 Mills Street – Historic Garage and Filling Station. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture.

402 E. Michigan Avenue – Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad Station (Kalamazoo Community Foundation). This building is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing to the Haymarket Historic District. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, the property appears to retain the requisite qualities to merit continued listing as a contributing property on the National Register.

Religion

In the Edison neighborhood, the survey team found multiple churches that are significant for their architecture under Criterion C and some that may be significant under Criterion A for their association with Ethnic History of the neighborhood. The Edison neighborhood had a strong association with various ethnic groups through its history including early settlement by Dutch celery famers and Latvian and Hungarian ethic groups. Later, Latinx and Black residents settled in the neighborhood. Today, Edison is remarkably diverse with many different faiths represented across the neighborhood.

Religion was an integral part of life for many during the era in which Kalamazoo was founded and settled. These early residents brought their religious faiths with them when they settled the Kalamazoo area. The first church built in Kalamazoo had its origins in meetings held by Titus

Bronson and his wife Sally in a school building on South Street.¹⁹⁵ Home based sermons and meetings such as this were common until the first church was built: “The first church building was erected in 1836 by Martin Heydenburk on South Street, just east of the present library building.”¹⁹⁶

Early churches in Kalamazoo are located downtown and include the First Baptist Church, founded in 1836, at 315 W. Michigan Avenue as well as the First Congregational Church, founded in 1835, at 345 W. Michigan Avenue.¹⁹⁷ Other early churches, all located outside of the Edison neighborhood, include St. Luke’s Episcopal Church located at 247 W. Lovell and the First Presbyterian Church, which currently stands at 321 W. South Street. The church at 321 W. South Street was built in 1930 after several earlier structures used by the congregation were lost to fire.¹⁹⁸ Early African American churches in Kalamazoo include the African Baptist Church (called the Second Missionary Baptist Church today) now located at 609 N. Rose Street and the Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church now located at 804 W. North Street.¹⁹⁹ Dutch settlers to the area formed the First Reformed Church in 1850 and later acquired the church at 302 Academy Street for their worship services.²⁰⁰

The Hungarian Reformed Church was founded in the Edison neighborhood near the corner of Mills and E. Crosstown Parkway as early as 1908 per the Sanborn map of that same year. A plaque on the building indicates the structure now extant was built in 1920, but little other archival information has been found about the Hungarian community in Edison. The changing demographics and cultures in Edison are showcased by the fact that the old Hungarian Reformed Church is now known as the Iglesia Resplandor de Gloria Church for the resident Latinx population. The Hungarian Reformed Church and is located within the bounds of the proposed Mills Street Historic District.

Dutch settlers formed the Second Reformed Church in the Edison neighborhood at 1833 S. Burdick near the corner of S. Burdick and E. Maple Street. The Second Reformed Church was founded by Sirk J. Wykkel and Samuel P. Mullie, both of Dutch descent, in 1905. After a small chapel was built, “Reverend John VanderMuelen of Hope College...[was] hired to lead the

¹⁹⁵ Fred Peppel, “First Presbyterian Church: A Phoenix from the Ashes,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2005. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/religion/first-presbyterian-church/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁹⁶ Fred Peppel, “Kalamazoo’s First Church Building: From Hymns to Horseshoes,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2005 <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/religion/kalamazoos-first-church-building/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁹⁷ Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 81-82.

¹⁹⁸ Fred Peppel, “First Presbyterian Church: A Phoenix from the Ashes,” Kalamazoo Public Library, 2005. <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/religion/first-presbyterian-church/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁹⁹ Kelle Barr, “Seven score and 15 years ago: Black residents started a Kalamazoo church now celebrating 155 years,” *MLive*, April 4, 2019. https://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/2009/05/seven_score_and_15_years_ago_b.html (accessed November 11, 2021); Dunbar and Gregg, *Kalamazoo and How it Grew*, 83.

²⁰⁰ Malachi Barrett, “Historic Kalamazoo church to be demolished for urban nature playground,” *MLive*, Jan 29, 2019. <https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/2019/01/historic-kalamazoo-church-to-be-demolished-for-urban-nature-playground.html> (accessed November 11, 2021).

services.”²⁰¹ In 1907, a new church was constructed to replace the original building. The current structure (portions of it) was built in 1932 but received a large remodel in 1972 after an arsonist set fire to the church.²⁰² In 1960, a new nursery and office wing was added to the east side of the building built in the modern style while the chapel, south hall, and the kitchen received a remodel.



Figure 103: Bethany Reformed Church, former Second Reformed Church, 1833 S. Burdick, April 2021, KDG

The Portage Street Baptist Church was located at 1030 Portage Street as far back as 1908 per the Sanborn map of that same year. The Kalamazoo Latvian Church purchased the building at 1030 Portage Street in the 1960s before later merging with the other Kalamazoo based Latvian congregation, the St. John Latvian Lutheran Church.²⁰³ When the two churches merged to form the merged Latvian Evangelical Lutheran congregation, the building at 1030 Portage was sold to the Comstock Church of the Nazarene in 1995. Later the building was called The River church. In 2018, the building was sold to the Dormouse Theater Troupe.²⁰⁴ The Dormouse Theater Troupe opened and presented their first performance in the fall of 2021.

Catholic worship in Kalamazoo goes back to nearly the founding of the town. The first Catholic settler was Dennis Talbot who moved to Kalamazoo in 1832, and it is likely the first formal mass

²⁰¹ “The Founding,” Bethany Reformed Church, <https://www.bethany-kalamazoo.org/the-early-church.html> (accessed November 11, 2021).

²⁰² “The Early Church,” Bethany Reformed Church, <https://www.bethany-kalamazoo.org/the-early-church.html> (accessed November 11, 2021).

²⁰³ Silvija Meija, “Kalamazoo Remains Active Despite Dwindling Numbers,” *Latvians Online*, Oct 20, 2007. <https://latviansonline.com/kalamazoo-remains-active-despite-dwindling-numbers/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

²⁰⁴ Al Jones, “Curtain is going up on the new theater in Kalamazoo’s Edison Neighborhood,” *Second Wave Media*, Feb 20, 2020. <https://www.secondwavemedia.com/southwest-michigan/features/Curtain2-is-going-up-on-new-theater-in-Kalamazoo-s-Edison-Neighborhood-022020.aspx> (accessed November 11, 2021).

was performed by Father Cullen in 1840 in a private home.²⁰⁵ In Edison, the St. Joseph Church, located at 936 Lake Street, was built in 1913 and designed by R.M. Gallup Company while the windows were purchased from The Munich Company out of Chicago.²⁰⁶ The rectory on Lake Street, faced in bright red/orange brick, is located directly adjacent to the church, was built in 1948, while the parish school and convent, located behind the main church with an address of 1128 Race Street, was built in the mid-1950s.²⁰⁷ The final addition to the St. Joseph complex came in 1967 when the building at 930 Lake Street was constructed. This addition provided additional classroom and administration space for the parish. Responding to the changing demographics in the neighborhood St. Josephs began offering Spanish language mass once per week in the early 1970s.²⁰⁸

Representative Examples:

610 Mills Street – Hungarian Reformed Church (Iglesia Resplandor de Gloria Church). Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Ethnic History and under Criterion C for Architecture. The building is also recommended eligible under Criteria Consideration A. The property is also recommended as a contributing property in the proposed Mills Street Commercial Historic District.

1833 S. Burdick – Second Reformed Church (now known as Bethany Reformed Church). Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Ethnic History and under Criterion C for Architecture. The building is also recommended eligible under Criteria Consideration A.

1030 Portage Street – Portage Street Baptist Church. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible Criterion C for Architecture. The building is also recommended eligible under Criteria Consideration A.

1009 Stockbridge – Stockbridge Methodist Church. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion A for Social History and under Criterion C for Architecture. The building is also recommended eligible under Criteria Consideration A. This property is recommended as non-contributing to the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District as it is outside of the period of significance for the district.

936 Lake Street – St. Joseph Catholic Church/El Concilio Hispanic American Council. Based on this reconnaissance level survey, this property is recommended as individually eligible under

²⁰⁵ “Our History: 1828-1904,” St. Joseph Catholic Church, <https://stjosephkalamazoo.org/1828-1904> (accessed November 11, 2021).

²⁰⁶ “Our History: 1904-1920,” St. Joseph Catholic Church, <https://stjosephkalamazoo.org/1904-1920> (accessed November 11, 2021).

²⁰⁷ “Our History: 1947-1962,” St. Joseph Catholic Church, <https://stjosephkalamazoo.org/1947-1962> (accessed November 11, 2021).

²⁰⁸ “Our History: 1947-1962,” St. Joseph Catholic Church, <https://stjosephkalamazoo.org/1969-1980> (accessed November 11, 2021).

Criterion A for Ethnic History and Social History and under Criterion C for Architecture. The building is also recommended eligible under Criteria Consideration A.

Survey Findings

The Edison neighborhood has substantial architectural resources that are worth protecting. Edison as a whole represents a large grouping of intact early twentieth century civic, residential, and commercial architecture. The remarkably intact neighborhood, the walkability of the commercial districts, and the rich architectural legacy are key foundations upon which to build.

Edison has experienced some vacancy, blight, and deferred maintenance in the latter decades of the twentieth century. What was once a thriving residential, commercial, and industrial community, Edison struggled as industrial competition and suburbanization trends contributed to a lack of investment in urban cores. This exodus to the suburbs also contributed to deterioration of the housing stock in the neighborhood as the relatively high paying jobs in the neighborhood began to disappear. Despite these challenges, today, the Edison neighborhood is seeing significant investment from the city and from local entrepreneurs and citizens who are working together to revitalize the neighborhood.

Preservation Issues and Threats

Tasked with identifying current preservation issues and threats, the survey team analyzed all the relevant history, survey data, and current trends and metrics. Based upon this data and the results of the fieldwork, the survey team has found four primary preservation issues facing historic resources in Edison. Each issue is discussed below in detail.

Inappropriate modifications

Historically incompatible renovations are a preservation threat, and there are many homes in the neighborhood that have lost significant integrity due to substantial renovations that utilize incompatible materials or make incompatible exterior changes. Removal of windows and application of asbestos and vinyl siding are prevalent throughout the neighborhood. Because natural materials like wood are common on these houses and because these natural materials require more care and attention than synthetic materials like vinyl siding, these homes are vulnerable to loss of integrity due to inappropriate modifications that either remove or cover historic material for their installation of “maintenance free” materials like vinyl and other plastics. The National Park Service has identified seven aspects of integrity and removing historic materials contributes to a loss of integrity in the categories of materials and workmanship. Historic materials give a glimpse into historic construction methods and practices of building—many of these materials and work methods are no longer available or are now prohibitively expensive making them worthy of preservation.

While products made of materials such as vinyl promises minimal upkeep, the reality is that the short lifespan and the “unfixable” nature of these synthetic materials all but ensure a cycle of replacement of these synthetic items will simply replace a cycle of maintenance that the natural

materials required. Educating homeowners on the costs and benefits of replacing the historic materials found on their homes may help mitigate some of the waste (both material and monetary) associated with inappropriate modifications.

Deferred maintenance and demolition

Lack of maintenance and/or demolition by neglect is an issue especially considering that the natural materials used to construct these buildings (wood siding and wood windows, generally) do require a cyclical maintenance program. There were many examples of buildings in the neighborhood that were vacant, unoccupied, or appeared uninhabitable due to serious neglect issues. Common deferred maintenance issues seen in the neighborhood include broken windowpanes, peeling paint, roof material deterioration, and brick, stone, and siding damage.

Although the neighborhood is still largely cohesive there have been demolitions throughout the neighborhood, which are evidenced by vacant lots in the residential area and significant losses in the industrial areas. Of the over 3,000 parcels surveyed the survey team identified approximately 162 vacant lots. The demolition of the historic creamery building and the city bottling works (both in the Washington Square area) are notable losses in the commercial areas, but the most significant losses have occurred in the industrial areas. In terms of lost industrial buildings, the Bryant Paper Mill, the King Paper Mill, and the Kalamazoo Railway Supply Company buildings are some of the noted losses in the neighborhood. Many other industrial buildings appeared so altered from the right of way it was impossible to determine whether the historic structure still existed in some form. This was observed at the Checker Cab Company location on S. Pitcher Street and the Aunt Millie's bakery on Portage Street. City owned buildings lost include the streetcar railway barn on Cameron Street and the historic school buildings at Edison Elementary and the Washington School.

Recognition

Part of the significance of the Edison neighborhood lies in the scale and breadth of the neighborhood which, while mostly comprised of modest buildings, combines to create a large neighborhood that is still remarkably intact. With 3,036 buildings surveyed and only 106 identified as under forty years of age, the sheer scale, age, and integrity of the neighborhood is remarkable. When one simple, front-gabled Folk National style home is analyzed on its own it may not seem like a remarkable building but Edison gains some of its significance when analyzing the neighborhood (and the proposed districts) as a whole. Recognizing patterns of community development and trends in history forms a historic context by which individual properties can better be evaluated. The significance of a historic resource can only be evaluated or judged when placed in a larger historic context or framework.

In part compounded by the issues identified above, there could be a lack of recognition that Edison is historic at all. Enhancing and promoting the unique architectural heritage may help combat some of the other preservation issues identified here. Considering this, the survey team

has presented multiple, smaller proposed districts rather than proposing one large Edison-wide district to assist the city in capitalizing on the tremendous physical assets present in the Edison neighborhood on a scale that might be more manageable.

Local Historic Districts and Preservation Planning

Even though the Edison neighborhood is nearly entirely comprised of housing stock older than fifty years of age, a lack of preservation planning in the neighborhood has left the entire Edison neighborhood without any recognized local historic districts. Local historic districts are the most powerful tool local governments have to protect the character and history of an area against irrevocable loss. Protection and promotion of the city's architectural assets are two of the most important functions of a local historic district. Local historic districts also provide the City's Historic District Commission the chance to review exterior modifications, which can assist with both the issues of inappropriate modifications and resident education, discussed above. Many studies have found that creating local historic districts can also help buoy and stabilize a local area by increasing property values—a 2016 study conducted by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network found that homes located in local historic districts added 12.6% to the property value as compared to non-designated properties.²⁰⁹ Another added benefit is that historic districts, and the commissioners who review projects located within them, can help educate homeowners about appropriate materials and designs for the exterior of these historic homes.

Overview of Survey Recommendations

In conducting this reconnaissance-level historic survey the project team found several proposed areas of the Edison neighborhood that appear to contain a cohesive set of highly intact buildings. These areas were identified as likely meeting the eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places and warrant further, intensive-level study. The survey team recommends selecting areas and periods of significance for these districts that include broad patterns of history and a full variety of historic context areas to capture the layered history in these areas.

This section outlines major recommendations related to the Edison neighborhood. It is recommended that the proposed historic districts and the individual sites listed below be further studied at the intensive level as they appear to meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. There are nine proposed districts and thirty-three buildings (two of which are already listed) deemed individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The recommendations section below discusses each proposed district in detail by providing a description, statement of significance, and a boundary rationale. The buildings deemed individually eligible are provided in the section below along with a statement of significance for each building.

²⁰⁹ Edward Coulson, "Local Historic Districts and Property Values in Michigan Neighborhoods," Michigan Historic Preservation Network (2016): 23.



Figure 104: Interior of Bryant Paper Mill, Undated, Courtesy of Mary Lou Howard

Recommendations for Intensive-Level Study

Potential National Register-Eligible Districts

This reconnaissance level survey identified nine potential National Register-eligible districts. It should be noted that the Edison neighborhood is highly intact, and there are very few properties less than 40 years of age. The neighborhood is highly cohesive and primarily residential with similar architectural styles seen throughout. The cohesion, integrity, and age of the buildings in the neighborhood made it difficult to identify distinct potential districts. To guide the decision-making process, historic plat maps and development patterns were initially used as a starting point when contemplating recommending historic districts. After that, visual inspection was used to further identify current clusters of extant, historic age buildings. The proposed districts identified below are an attempt to distinguish the most significant areas within Edison but should in no way be considered the only significant areas within the neighborhood.

The following proposed historic districts merit further intensive-level study, and their boundaries and significance are detailed below. Maps of the proposed districts may be found in Appendix A and Michigan SHPO Architectural District Identification Forms for each proposed district may be found in Appendix C.

Mill Street Commercial District

Description:

The recommended Mills Street Commercial Historic District comprises approximately two blocks along Mills Street near Fourth Street and East Crosstown Parkway. The buildings are predominately on the west side of Mills Street with one exception near Fourth Street. It contains many early- and mid-century commercial buildings as well as the original location of the Hungarian Reformed Church built in 1920.

Resource Count:

24 Total Resources
13 Contributing Resources
11 Non-Contributing Resources

Significance:

The proposed Mills Street Commercial district is one of the few commercial corridors in the Edison neighborhood. The proposed district is recommended as eligible under Criterion A for Commerce, Ethnic History, and Religion. The lone church in the district, the Hungarian Reformed Church, is the centerpiece of the district with various commercial buildings existing to the north and south of the church. Not only was this a thriving commercial thoroughfare in the mid-twentieth century but Mills Street appears to have been the center of Edison's eastern European population, including the Hungarian population. The proposed district is also significant under Criterion C for Architecture as the commercial structures constitute a fine example of early and mid-twentieth century commercial architecture including Art Deco, Modern, and Carpenter Gothic.

Boundary Rationale:

This boundary was devised to include historic commercial and religious buildings which supported those living in this area of the Edison neighborhood in the early half of the twentieth century. The boundary for the proposed district terminates just north of East Crosstown Parkway and just south of Fourth street where Mills Street transitions to being lined by predominately vacant lots and non-historic buildings.

Washington Square Commercial District

Description:

The proposed Washington Square Commercial Historic District consists of multiple 1900 era Italianate inspired three part commercial block buildings including the Foy Block and the Dore building. The district also includes Art Deco commercial buildings such as the Ernest Wise building, the B.M. Barber building, and the building at 1301-1319 Portage St. The proposed district also extends slightly to the east down Washington Ave to incorporate a few more modest, smaller commercial buildings including a two-part commercial block building and a one-story mid-century modern building. The northern end of the district incorporates multiple civic buildings including the Washington Square Branch Kalamazoo Public Library and the Portage Street Fire Station which is already individually listed on the National Register.

Resource Count:

Total Resources: 8

Contributing Resources: 7

Non-Contributing Resources: 1

Significance:

This proposed district is likely significant under Criterion A for Commerce as it is a fine collection of commercial and municipal buildings which served as a center for civic and commercial activity in the Edison neighborhood in the early and mid-1900s. This district is also recommended as significant under Criterion A for Social History as the historic library branch and the fire hall station showcase the civic infrastructure built in the area to promote the overall welfare of the Edison community. Finally, this district is recommended as significant under Criterion C for Architecture as it contains intact examples of small and medium scale commercial and civic architecture.

Boundary Rationale:

This boundary was devised to incorporate historic commercial and civic or municipal buildings. The boundary extends to Collins Street to the north and Stockbridge Ave to the south at which point the streetscapes become more residential. The boundary includes the commercial buildings along Portage and Washington Ave and also extends north to include the library and fire station which are the two significant civic buildings identified within the proposed district.

South Burdick Commercial District

Description:

The proposed South Burdick Historic District is a collection of late 1800s to early 1900s commercial buildings. The buildings are primarily two-part commercial blocks in a restrained Italianate style with bracketed cornices seen on many of the buildings. These buildings are majority wood frame with wood siding save for a few one-story masonry storefronts appended to the front of residential buildings. These storefront additions to residential dwellings date to the 1920s and 1930s.

Resource Count:

Total Resources: 8

Contributing Resources: 7

Non-Contributing Resources: 1

Significance:

The proposed South Burdick Commercial Historic District is comprised of several small, late nineteenth century and early twentieth century commercial buildings located near the intersection of S. Burdick and Reed Streets. This area contains some of the oldest commercial buildings in the Edison neighborhood that were identified during this reconnaissance level survey. This proposed district is recommended as eligible under Criterion A for Commerce due to the area's role in cultivating a commercial core along South Burdick in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This proposed district is also recommended as eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. There are several intact examples of small-scale, storefront style commercial architecture and small commercial shops added onto residential dwellings that are still extant in the proposed district.

Boundary Rationale:

This boundary is rectangular in form and includes the commercial buildings on the east side of South Burdick Street. The boundary was devised to consist of the historic commercial buildings which line South Burdick Street, all of which contributed to providing a commercial corridor for the residents in this area of the Edison neighborhood at the turn of the twentieth century.

South Portage Commercial District

Description:

The proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District includes both sides of Portage Street between Lane Boulevard and Bryant Street and the east side of Portage Street between Bryant Street to Palmer Ave. This proposed historic district is a grouping of early twentieth century commercial buildings, primarily one-story brick or masonry storefronts with simple rectangular forms. This commercial corridor has significant architectural features as many of the buildings, while humble in form and size, have Art Deco detailing and integrity of workmanship and materials.

Resource Count:

Total Resources: 5
Contributing Resources: 3
Non-Contributing: 2

Significance:

The proposed South Portage Commercial Historic District is a collection of Art Deco era early twentieth century commercial buildings. The proposed district is recommended eligible under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture. The buildings are indicative of the role Portage Street played as a lively commercial corridor in the early to mid-1900's due to the rapid growth of the Edison neighborhood and the proximity to nearby industry such as the Bryant Paper Mill and the Imperial Coating Co. These industries employed large quantities of people, many Edison residents, and likely spurred commercial growth in proximity of their facilities. The stone and masonry buildings are representative of the architecture of small neighborhood scale commercial buildings in the early twentieth century and are largely intact often featuring Deco inspired decorative brickwork and stepped parapets. Additional research is needed on the specific history of this proposed district to fully understand the districts potential eligibility based on the criteria.

Boundary Rationale:

The boundary was formed to include the intact collection of Art Deco style commercial storefronts as well as the Aunt Millie's bakery building which may include portions of the historic bakery building which once sat in that location. The boundary was devised to consist of the historic commercial buildings which line south Portage Street, all of which contributed to

providing a commercial corridor for the residents in this area of the Edison neighborhood at the turn of the twentieth century.

Ihling Everard Residential District

Description:

The proposed Ihling Everard Residential district is a small collection of early 1900s houses on Reed Avenue, High Street, and State Street. There are three basic models found in this neighborhood: a hipped-and-gabled Folk Victorian style home found primarily on the lots on Reed Avenue; a front gabled Folk Victorian style home with a recessed arch under the gable; and a front gabled Folk Victorian with scalloped shingles under the gable. Specific information about the development of this neighborhood has not been found but, based solely on the visual assessment conducted during the reconnaissance survey, it can be assumed that the developers offered a small selection of plans as the architecture is so repetitive, cohesive, and intact.

Resource Count:

Total Resources: 33

Contributing Resources: 27

Non-Contributing Resources: 6

Significance:

The houses in the proposed Ihling Everard Residential Historic District represent an intact collection of early twentieth century Folk Victorian homes built in three forms likely from a plan book. The cohesive nature of this proposed district distinguishes it from surrounding residential areas. Further, the plat's relationship to Ihling Brothers Everard Company, a prolific Kalamazoo based company known for the creation of masonic regalia, adds to the significance of this area. This district is recommended eligible under Criterion C for Architecture as a fine collection of Folk Victorian style homes. Additional research may provide information on the district's significance under different criterion.

Boundary Rationale:

The boundary for the Ihling Everard Residential district was drawn to include the areas within the original 1901 Ihling Plat containing a collection of Folk Victorian houses in three distinct forms.

Van Zee Residential District

Description:

The area in the proposed Van Zee Residential Historic District was platted in 1884 by Frederick and Mary Van Zee while the houses themselves were constructed between 1884 and 1910. The district is highly intact and includes varying architectural styles and forms. The houses which date to the late nineteenth century are primarily Upright and Wing or simple vernacular one-story dwellings with hipped roofs while the later houses in the district, built in the early twentieth century, are primarily Prairie Foursquare and Folk Victorian. The Van Zee district is adjacent to railroad to the east and South Burdick to the west and meets the proposed Ihling Everard residential district along Reed Avenue at the north.

Resource Count:

Total Resources: 100

Contributing Resources: 74

Non-Contributing Resources: 26

Significance:

The proposed Van Zee Residential Historic District is one of the earliest platted residential areas within the Edison neighborhood and is one of the most intact. The district is recommended as eligible under Criterion C for Architecture as a fine intact collection of popular architectural styles at the turn of the twentieth century. Further, this district may also be eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development as it represents the swiftly changing development patterns in the Edison neighborhood as large plats of land owned largely by Dutch settlers became platted and subdivided as Kalamazoo grew south and more industry took root along the railroads, Portage Creek, and the Kalamazoo River. Within the proposed district itself, the varying architectural styles give evidence as to the increasing wealth, density, and development patterns occurring in the neighborhood. After the turn of the century, more intricate styles took the place of the simple vernacular dwellings constructed in the plat in the 1880s. As there are so few nineteenth century houses remaining in Edison, this area is one of the few where these turn of the century changing tastes and styles are so apparent. These houses resemble popular Folk Victorian styles seen across the Edison neighborhood providing a clue that the neighborhood was becoming more cohesive in its style and development patterns.

Boundary Rationale:

The boundary for the Van Zee Residential district was drawn to include the areas within the original 1884 Van Zee Addition plat containing a collection of residential buildings of various popular architectural styles. The boundary also includes the houses on the north side of East Maple Street, called Wilhelmina Street in 1884. These houses were not included in the original plat map although are of the same vintage and were likely built concurrently.

Linden Park District

Description:

Linden Park is a neighborhood developed by Charles B. Hays. Homebuyers were able to select from a limited selection of plans designed by architect A.M. Worthington. The neighborhood originally comprised of 56 houses and consists of several repeating designs made up of narrow bungalows, Tudor single-family homes and duplexes, Colonial Revivals, and simple front gabled Folk National style houses. While A.M. Worthington was the architect, Howard Young did the decorating for the model unit located at 601 Lay Boulevard.

Resources Count:

Total Resources: 67

Contributing Resources:

Non-Contributing Resources: 5

Significance:

The neighborhood is recommended as eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development given that the subdivision was strategically located across the street from the Bryant Paper Mill to provide additional housing stock for this large employer of Edison neighborhood residents. The neighborhood is also recommended as eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. Linden Park utilizes several plans developed by architect A.M. Worthington that are repeated throughout the district. Additional research is necessary to fully understand the districts potential eligibility and to determine the appropriate criterion and areas of significance for the proposed historic district. The proposed district retains integrity in all seven aspects.

Boundary Rationale:

The boundary for the proposed Linden Park district was drawn to include the areas within the original 1890 plat as well as the areas incorporated in the 1905 and 1910 expansion plats. The boundary includes the original 56 houses developed by Charles Hays and designed by A.M. Worthington plus an additional 11 houses within the immediate vicinity and built within the period of significance.

Hays Park / South Park District

Description:

Hays Park / South Park is a primarily residential area bounded by E. Alcott to the south, Fulford to the east, Washington Ave to the north, and Portage to the west as well as the area bounded by Stockbridge Ave to the north, Reed Court to the west, Reed Ave to the south, and Portage to the east. The area is generally flat and is a highly intact collection of early twentieth century houses located at the core of the Edison neighborhood and is largely located on the site of the former National Driving Park.

Resource Count:

Total Resources: 1,460

Contributing Resources: 1,327

Non-Contributing Resources: 133

Significance:

The proposed Hays Park/South Park district appears to be significant under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development as these areas were purposefully platted to provide housing for the adjacent industries found along the nearby Kalamazoo River. The district appears to also be significant under Criterion C for architecture as the extant houses represent an impressive collection of early twentieth century architectural styles including Queen Anne, American Foursquare, Folk Victorian, and Craftsman Bungalow, among others. The district retains integrity in all seven aspects. Additional research is needed on the specific history of this portion of the neighborhood to fully understand the districts potential eligibility based on the criteria.

Boundary Rationale:

The boundary for the proposed Hays Park / South Park district was drawn to include the areas within the 1895 South Side Improvement Addition, the 1900 Hays Park plat, the 1905 Hays Park Revised plat, and the 1906 South Park Addition plat. The boundary does not include the houses in the South Park Addition plat which date to the 1940s and 1950s as these houses are incorporated in the adjacent proposed South Edison district.

South Edison District

Description:

The proposed South Edison district is a collection of houses built primarily between 1939 and 1960. The houses represent an intact collection of mid-twentieth century minimal traditional and ranch style houses. While recognizable for their ‘stripped-down’ nature and lack of ornament,

many of the houses include large street facing picture windows and breezeways connecting the houses and garages –quintessential elements in mid-twentieth century residential architecture. Many of these houses are further set back from the street than the early-twentieth century houses found elsewhere in the neighborhood. There are also some rolling hills and landscape variety in this area which is not found elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Resource Count:

Total Resources: 237

Contributing Resources: 214

Non-Contributing Resources: 23

Significance:

The South Edison Historic District may be eligible under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development as the proliferation of houses in this area correspond to the housing boom during and after World War II. While the northern portion of the district, including Palmer Avenue, was originally platted in 1906 as the South Park Addition, the majority of the houses were constructed in the 1940's and 50's. The area bounded by Fulton Street, Factory Street, Miller Road, and James Street was platted in 1939 as the Elmwood Plat and, similarly, were primarily constructed in the 1940's and 50's. The district is also recommended eligible under Criterion C for Architecture as it includes such a comprehensive variety of minimal traditional houses. The resource retains integrity in all seven aspects. Additional research will need to be conducted to determine the significance of this potential historic district as well as put this historic district in to the proper context of other mid-century neighborhoods in the city.

Boundary Rationale:

The boundary of the district was created to include the 1939 Elmwood Plat as well as the mid-century houses in the adjacent 1906 South Park Addition plat. The boundary also includes Hays Park, a community feature saved when the neighborhood rallied together to prevent the land's sale to the National Waterlift plant nearby.

Sites with Individual Significance

The following 31 sites merit future intensive level research as this reconnaissance survey indicates these sites could each meet the criteria for individually eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. These sites generally fall into a few categories: early twentieth century industrial buildings, religious structures, fine examples of modern commercial architecture, and mid-nineteenth century houses of which there are only a handful left in the Edison neighborhood. Two additional sites are listed below as they are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Finally, one site is listed below with a recommendation that

a State Historic Marker be placed at the location to honor a site that no longer has extant historic age buildings or structures.

1415-1416 Fulford Street

1415-1416 Fulford Street is a handsome late nineteenth century industrial building. This building is one of the oldest extant factory buildings in the Edison neighborhood with a high level of integrity. The building is constructed of red brick with steel arched top industrial windows on all elevations. Not only is the building significant for its early-twentieth century industrial style architecture, it is also significant for its relationship to the transportation history of the Edison neighborhood. The building was originally constructed to build chassis for the nearby Michigan Buggy Company.

2025 Factory Street

This building was occupied by Humphrey Manufacturing according to the 1932 Sanborn. Humphrey produced water heaters. Later, in 1954-1955 the Modern style office was added to the primary (east) façade on Factory Street. Ruud Manufacturing and, later, Rheem Manufacturing bought the company—Rheem occupied this site from 1960 to approximately 1970. This building is potentially significant for its association with the Industrial history of Kalamazoo under Criterion A and it is also potentially significant for its Modern style industrial architecture under Criterion C. This building retains all aspects of integrity as indicated on page one of this form.

1014 Mills Street

1014 Mills St is an Art Deco style building formerly an auto service station. The building sits on an angle facing the corner of Lake St and Mills St. The building is composed of a hipped roof port cochere supported on brick piers and a one story service station building. Based on this Reconnaissance Level survey 1014 Mills Street is recommended individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as it is an intact example of an Art Deco style twentieth century filling station. Further intensive level research should determine the exact build date in order to finesse the period of significance.

2315 Miller Road

2315 Miller Road is a Modern style industrial factory building with a long, low profile. This building is the former International Paper Co. a manufacturer of paper milk containers. The building was constructed in 1950. The current building is much larger and it appears there was a substantial addition to the rear of the building at some point after 1950. Based on this reconnaissance level survey 2315 Miller is potentially individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for Industry and Criterion C for Architecture. The building is a fine example of Modern style industrial architecture with its use of the long, rectilinear form, ribbon windows, and concrete accents. The building was originally constructed as the International

Paper Co. and is evidence of the robust history of paper manufacturing in the Edison neighborhood and the legacy of factories located along the railroad tracks which run through the Edison neighborhood.

1500 Lamont Ave

The Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office is an irregularly shaped Brutalist style building. The Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office building is recommended as individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as a fine example of Brutalist style architecture as applied to government buildings in the mid- to late- twentieth century. Further intensive research should verify the build date to ensure it meets the age requirement for the National Register.

1323 Lane Boulevard

1323 Lane Blvd is a Gothic Revival style church with a Modern style addition on the rear (north) end of the building. The church is on the corner of Lane Blvd and March Street. The Seasons of Change church, originally the Lane Boulevard Church, is recommended individually eligible under Criterion C as it is a fine example of Gothic Revival architecture. The 1953 classroom/administration wing addition is an intact example of Modern style architecture. Further intensive level research may reveal significance under another Criterion.

1833 South Burdick Street

The Bethany Reformed Church consists of the church and an administration/classroom wing appended to the east side of the church and oriented north/south. The church building is a Gothic Revival style building with multi-toned brown and beige bricks. The wing addition is Modern in style and is two-stories with a flat roof and a rectangular form. Dutch settlers formed the Second Reformed Church in the Edison neighborhood at 1833 S. Burdick near the corner of S. Burdick and E. Maple Street. Both of Dutch descent, the Second Reformed Church was founded by Sirk J. Wykkel and Samuel P. Mullie, in 1905. After a small chapel was built, "Reverend John VanderMuelen of Hope College...[was] hired to lead the services." The current structure (portions of it) was built in 1932 and it was remodeled in 1972 after an arsonist set fire to the church. The modern wing on the rear of the structure was built in 1960 as additional space was needed for classrooms and administration. The Bethany Reformed Church, originally known as the Second Reformed Church, is recommended individually eligible under Criterion A for its ethnic history associated with Dutch settlement in Kalamazoo and under Criterion C for architecture. The church is a fine example of late Gothic Revival style church architecture while the rear wing is an intact example of modern architecture. Further intensive level research may reveal significance under another Criterion.

1301-1319 Portage Street

This building was constructed as the Kalamazoo Trust & Savings Bank in in the early 1920s before becoming the Bank of Kalamazoo from 1927 until 1934. From 1935-1947 The two-story wing operated as the John D Lyons Drug Company after which it became McDonald's Cut Rate Drugs. Various commercial businesses occupied the storefronts in the long wing which runs along Portage including multiple medical facilities such as dentists and chiropractor's offices. The building currently is occupied by various commercial tenants. This building is recommended as individually eligible under Criterion C for Architecture for its intact Art Deco architecture, however, this determination for individual eligibility is dependent upon an assessment of the interior. The building may also be eligible under Criterion A for Commerce due to the building's history as the location of various Kalamazoo local banks which played a role in commerce in the Edison neighborhood and larger Kalamazoo.

936 Lake Street

St. Joseph Church consists of the original church building and 3 distinct additions. The original church building is a two-tower Gothic Revival style church in a dark brown brick with limestone detailing. The windows are stained glass with limestone tracery. St. Joseph Church, located at 936 Lake Street, was built in 1913 and was designed by R.M. Gallup company while the windows were purchased from The Munich Company out of Chicago.²¹⁰ The rectory on Lake Street, located directly adjacent to the church, was built in 1948 while the parish school and convent, located behind the main church with an address of 1128 Race Street, was built in the mid-1950s.²¹¹ The final addition to the St. Joseph complex came in 1967 when the building at 930 Lake Street was constructed. This addition provided additional classroom and administration space for the parish. Responding to the changing demographics in the neighborhood St. Josephs began offering Spanish language mass once per week in the early 1970s. The church is also home to El Concilio the Hispanic American Counsel in the Edison neighborhood. St. Joseph Catholic church is recommended individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for Ethnic History and Social History and under Criterion C for Architecture. The buildings are intact examples of Gothic Revival and modern style architecture. The buildings also are significant in shaping the social lives of the Catholic residents of the Edison neighborhood and, later in the 1970's, the Hispanic speaking Catholic residents of Edison. Further research should be completed.

803 Mills Street

805 Mills Street is a front gabled church with a bell tower and steeple centered on the roof ridge. The church is rectangular in plan and the front entrance is centered on the primary façade with wooden double doors covered by a gabled portico supported on wood brackets. 805 Mills Street

²¹⁰“Our History: 1904-1920,” St. Joseph Catholic Church, <https://stjosephkalamazoo.org/1904-1920> (accessed November 11, 2021).

²¹¹ “Our History: 1947-1962,” St. Joseph Catholic Church, <https://stjosephkalamazoo.org/1947-1962> (accessed November 11, 2021).

is the second church location for the Hungarian Reformed Church. This church was built in 1947 and the congregation moved to this church after worshipping at 610 Mills Street from 1920-1947. The church is the current location of the Living the Word congregation, and it is unclear if this congregation is related to the Hungarian Reformed Church. 805 Mills Street is recommended individually eligible under Criterion A for Ethnic History and Social History. This church is the second location of the Hungarian Reformed Church congregation which originally worshipped at 610 Mills Street. This building is not only significant for its association with the Hungarian population which settled in the Edison neighborhood but is also significant as it tells the story of how the Hungarian Reformed Church congregation grew and expanded along Mills Street through the twentieth century.

610 Mills Street

610 Mills Street is a front gabled church with a tall bell tower centered on the primary façade. This church is the original location of the Hungarian Reformed Church. The congregation worshipped here from 1920 until 1947 when they moved to a new church at 803 Mills Street. This church is now the location of the Iglesias Resplendor de Gloria congregation. This building is recommended individually eligible under Criterion A for Ethnic History and Criterion C for Architecture. The building is the first location for the Hungarian Reformed Church, a congregation of Hungarian immigrants which had settled in Kalamazoo. The church is an example of simple, carpenter gothic architecture and is intact. The building is also recommended as a contributing property in the proposed Mills Street Commercial Historic District.

1204 Bank Street

1204 Bank St is a farmers market pavilion structure. The pavilions are in the shape of a U, with the opening on Bank St. The farmer's market pavilion at 1204 Bank St. is recommended individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for Agriculture and Social History. The farmer's market has existed at this location since the 1940's when it relocated from Portage Street and Washington Ave. The farmer's market is primary location where produce and other goods is sold and it has historically been a gathering place for farmers and the residents of the Edison neighborhood. The pavilion is intact and has integrity in all 7 aspects as listed on page 1 of this form. The existing pavilion structure is currently being renovated and determination of eligibility is dependent upon the appropriateness of the ongoing modifications.

2020 Fulford Street

2020 Fulford is a brick industrial building with a rectangular form and a flat membrane roof. The primary façade facing Fulford Street is divided into six bays by brick piers capped with Deco style stone detailing and the side elevations are ten bays each divided by the same brick piers. The factory building at 2020 Fulford was originally constructed in 1930 for Kalasign of America (formerly the Merchants Publishing company). The factory was constructed for \$80,000. The Kalasign of America factory produced signs via a screen-printing process. In 1964 Gibson Guitar

Corporation purchased the Kalasign plant. Gibson operated at the factory between 1964-1970. The building was known then as Plant 3 and it was the home of amplifier production, the String Division, and pick-up production. At some point after 1970 the building was purchased by Ihling Bros. & Everard Company. This company is one of the oldest Masonic and Fraternal Regalia manufacturers in the country founded in 1869. Ihling Bros. & Everard Company operated out of this factory until 1995 when they were acquired by Kalamazoo Sportswear and relocated back to downtown Kalamazoo. This building is recommended as eligible and is potentially significant under Criterion C for its intact Deco inspired industrial style architecture. The building is also potentially significant under Criterion A for its association with Industry. The building was home to Kalasign of America, Gibson Co., and Ihling Bros. & Everard Company. This building retains integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, location, feeling, and association.

1018 Walter Street

Upjohn Park is a large municipal park with open athletic fields, a skate park, a playground, and a tennis court in addition to the Kik Pool and Pool House. The Upjohn Park and Nicholas Kik pool house are recommended eligible under both Criterion A for social history and Criterion C for architecture. The Upjohn Park and Nicholas Kik pool were designed to provide a community resource for Kalamazoo residents and to offer a location for residents to mingle, socialize, and to swim. The pool is named after Nicholas Kik the former director of the City of Kalamazoo's Park and Rec department. Since its opening in 1971 the pool has upheld the original vision and acted as a hub for the community to socialize and gather in the summer months. The pool house is also a fine example of modern architecture with its concrete construction and exposed precast concrete tee joist structure. The park and pool house are intact and holds integrity in all 7 aspects.

642 Portage Street

Built in 1929 this building originally housed the Otto Aldrich Drugs and Post Office Station #10 until 1936. It was then purchases by Reinhart Rock in 1940 and was the location of Rock Drug Store and P.O. Station 10 until 1972. The storefront windows have been infilled and altered at an unknown time. This building is recommended eligible for the National Register with significance under Criterion C for its Spanish Revival architecture. Further research may reveal significance under other Criterion. This building retains integrity of setting, design, workmanship, location, feeling, and association.

760 E Vine Street

This building is recommended eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and is potentially significant under Criterion C for its intact industrial barn-style architecture. Further research may reveal significance under other Criterion. This building retains integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, location, feeling, and association.

1030 Portage Street

Originally founded as the Portage Street Baptist Church this building was eventually used by the Kalamazoo Latvian Church in the 1960s. As an intact example of a Shingle style Victorian church the building at 1030 Portage is recommended as eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C for its architectural significance. The stained-glass rosette window, shingle cladding in the gables and the diamond window are all evocative of the Victorian Shingle style architecture. Further research may reveal significance under a different criterion. The resource retains integrity in all the categories checked on page one of this form

1825 State Street

1825 State St. is recommended individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture but is recommended non-contributing to the proposed Ihling Everard Residential historic district as it is outside of the likely period of significance. The house holds integrity in all seven aspects – location, design, material, workmanship, setting, location, and feeling. Despite the addition of exterior wood stairs, the house is largely intact, and these modifications are reversible. As a mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival style house this is one of the oldest residential structures still extant in the Edison neighborhood As one of the only examples of a mid-1800's house in the Edison neighborhood, it gives a rare glimpse into the architectural styles and development patterns prevalent in this part of Kalamazoo at the time.

710 Collins Street

As a large intact example of Modern style architecture this building is recommended as eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C for architecture. This style of architecture built at this scale is unusual in the Edison neighborhood. Further research may reveal significance under a different criterion. The resource retains integrity in all the categories checked on page one of this form.

1244 Portage Street

Built in 1927 and designed by Kalamazoo based Billingham and Cobb architects this building initially cost \$50,000 to build. It opened on August 29, 1927, and originally held 7,600 volumes. In 1997 the building was renovated at a cost of \$900,000. Originally the building had a slate roof, however, these have been replaced with modern shingles. This building is recommended significant both individually under Criterion A and C for social history and architecture and its significance as a contributing resource to the proposed Washington Square Historic District. As an intact example of a substantial Tudor Revival style building, it is recommended individually significant under Criterion C. Additionally, it is also eligible individually for its association with the social history development in Kalamazoo by providing library access to citizens in southeast Kalamazoo. It is also eligible as a contributing property in the proposed Washington Square Historic District.

635 Second Street

Originally this was the Peter Eckrich & Son sausage and meat factory. This building is recommended individually eligible as an intact example of Art Deco industrial architecture, and it is likely significant under Criterion C for architecture. This building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

1104 Portage Street

The 1932 Sanborn maps shows this building was utilized as a filling station. This building is recommended eligible as an intact example of Art Deco – Streamline Moderne style architecture under Criterion C. Commercial buildings of this style are not typical in the Edison neighborhood and the fact that is still intact and instantly recognizable as an Art Deco-era filling station contributes to its significance as one of just a few styles of this type still extant in the neighborhood. It retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

536 E Michigan Ave

In the 1908 Sanborn this building was the location of the A.W. Walsh Co. Wholesale Grocers. This building is an intact example of a wood framed brick warehouse which provided for a grocery wholesaling business servicing Kalamazoo. This building is significant under Criterion C for its architecture as an intact example of mid-scale warehouse building which are relatively rare in the Edison neighborhood and is recommended eligible based on the information present in this survey.

845 Gibson Street

This building is recommended eligible as an intact example of Modern style industrial architecture under Criterion C. It retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association

1009 E Stockbridge Ave

The First Methodist Church (located at South Park and Academy Streets) had a role in establishing the Stockbridge Avenue Methodist Church. In January of 2019 the church suffered a fire that burned the second-floor youth activity room. Although this church is outside the period of significance for the proposed Hays Park/South Park Historic District it is recommended to be individually eligible under Criterion C for its mid-century contemporary architecture and under Criterion A for its association with the religious life of the Edison neighborhood.

835 Reed Ave

835 Reed Avenue is recommended individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture. The house holds integrity in all seven aspects – location, design, material,

workmanship, setting, location, and feeling. Despite modern aluminum siding the house is largely intact. As a mid-nineteenth century Italianate style house—and one of the only Italianates discovered during this survey—this is one of the oldest residential structures still extant in the Edison neighborhood. As one of the few remaining examples of a mid-1800's house in the Edison neighborhood, it gives a rare glimpse into the architectural styles and development patterns prevalent in this part of Kalamazoo before the neighborhood was platted and developed in the early 1900s.

841 Reed Ave

841 Reed Avenue is recommended individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture. The house holds integrity in all seven aspects – location, design, material, workmanship, setting, location, and feeling. Despite some replacement vinyl windows the house is largely intact. As a mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival style house this is one of the oldest residential structures still extant in the Edison neighborhood. As one of the few remaining examples of a mid-1800's house in the Edison neighborhood, it gives a rare glimpse into the architectural styles and development patterns prevalent in this part of Kalamazoo before the neighborhood was platted and developed in the early 1900s.

2129 Portage Street

This building was occupied by the Lambooy Label and Wrapper Company from 1914 to at least 1968. This building is recommended individually eligible under Criterion C as an intact example of an early, small-scale industrial building. The building is still highly intact with arched roofs, stepped parapets, and brick facing and still retains all seven aspects of integrity.

1121 Miller Road

A 1959 article in the Lansing State Journal reported that the building opened in June of 1959 and was a “single story, more-than-block square building on the city’s southeast side.” The building cost \$1.5 million according to that same article. The date upon which the second story was added to the building was not determined. This building is eligible individually as intact example of a modern style United State Postal Service building. Finished in 1959 the building became the main post office for Kalamazoo when the downtown post office was transferred to this building that same year. The building displays hallmark features of the modern style including aluminum curtain windows on the primary facade, metal spandrel panels and long ribbons of aluminum windows on the secondary facades. The building is recommended eligible for its architecture under Criterion C and for its significance in the history of the United State Postal Service under Criterion A in the Politics/Government area of significance.

1501 Fulford Street

1501 Fulford is recommended individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and Criterion C as an example of a circa 1900 factory building in the Edison neighborhood. This building is significant in the areas of industry, military, transportation, and architecture. The building maintains its integrity in all 7 of the key aspects. Originally built as

Star Brass Works, this building is significant as was the foundry which produced brass trolley wheels and wheel bearings during the height of streetcar popularity. The foundry also created components for Gibson's pre-war Mastertone banjos. The building has World War II significance as in 1941 the garage outbuilding was constructed as the building use adapted to producing munitions for the war effort.

1249 Portage Street (Portage Street Fire Station - Already Listed on the National Register)

311 E Alcott St (Illinois Envelope Co. Building - Already Listed on the National Register)

251 Mills Street (State Historic Marker)

This 64-acre park which fronts the Kalamazoo River has a baseball stadium to the east, a playground to the north, and a soccer/football field to the west. Formally called the Catholic Athletic Association field this park is where the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League team The Kalamazoo Lassies played their games from 1951 to 1954. Because this a significance municipal park dating from at least the 1920s and because it was the location of an All-American Girls Professional Baseball League team the park has historic significance even though there are no extant buildings on the site that date to the period in which the Kalamazoo Lassies played. Because of this it is recommended that Michigan Historical Marker be installed here in lieu of a recommendation of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

Conclusion

The survey report and the survey inventory forms for this reconnaissance survey are intended to provide a baseline of historic analysis of the Edison neighborhood. The survey spanned from February of 2021 to June of 2022 with the final deliverable delivered to the State Historic Preservation office and the City of Kalamazoo in April of 2022. This survey report is not definitive but rather it is a starting point for analysis and future planning and research. The survey report, the survey inventory forms, survey photographs, archival resources, historic photographs, and the GIS shape files have been provided to the State Historic Preservation Office as a primary deliverable of this project.

As a neighborhood of highly intact historic-age buildings, the Edison neighborhood is an important asset to the City of Kalamazoo. Further research is important as historic preservation planning efforts that are based on sound data can have significant positive economic and cultural benefits for the recipient communities. Moreover, historic preservation efforts can help build a positive local identity by recognizing the cultural heritage that makes the Edison neighborhood unique. Walkable retail districts like those in the proposed Washington Square Historic District, the South Burdick Commercial District, and the South Portage Commercial District are key areas that can help revitalize the neighborhood. Historic preservation creates construction jobs and studies show that properties in historic districts appreciate faster than those outside of designated districts—in fact, rent data released by PlaceEconomics indicates that density is higher in historic

district versus other areas of the studied cities.²¹² Heritage tourism, while relatively new, is a burgeoning area to explore especially since Edison's industrial and architectural legacy is so rich. As the housing shortage continues, extolling the virtues of historic housing and how these buildings can help alleviate the shortage is also an area worth exploring. And finally,

With a goal of researching and documenting every building in the Edison neighborhood the project progressed from initial research, to fieldwork, to survey analysis, to, finally, drawing conclusions from the data found and writing the survey report. This report attempts to integrate all of this information and is intended to provide a basis upon which the City of Kalamazoo and the State of Michigan can continue to build as planning progresses. It is the intent of this survey to provide recommendations for additional research and to identify areas of the Edison neighborhood that would most benefit from intensive level study and future preservation planning activities, whether a National Register nomination, creation of a local historic district, or other preservation mechanisms.



Figure 105: Bryant Paper Mill aerial image, 1904, Kalamazoo Public Library

²¹² "Population Density in Historic Districts vs Rest of City," PlaceEconomics, accessed 2/4/22, <https://www.placeeconomics.com/>

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SECTION III

Appendix A: Maps

Appendix B: Credentials

Appendix C: District Inventory Forms and Indexed Properties List

Appendix D: Chart of Properties Under 40

Appendix E: Inventory Forms