Letter To Editor — How Tippecanoe Neighborhood got its name

Illustration of the J. C. Howard farm published the 1876 Milwaukee County Atlas. COURTESY Bay View Historical Society

In response to the article in the January issue of the Bay View Compass about the renovation of the Tippecanoe Library, I would like to offer more information about the naming of Milwaukee’s Tippecanoe neighborhood.
This photo of the J. C. Howard farmhouse is depicted in the 1876 Milwaukee County Atlas (top above). The 160-acre farm was located on the southwest corner of today’s the intersection of Howard and Howell avenues. Ron Winkler estimates that the home was located in the vicinity Third Street and Waterford Avenue.

COURTESY Bay View Historical Society

Tippecanoe was originally a farming district that was centered on the intersection of Howell and Howard avenues, where the Morgan, Howard, Burdick, and Austin families operated farms that supplied fruits, vegetables, and grains to Milwaukee.

Farms were established as soon as the land surrounding the intersection Howard and Howell avenues was settled in 1838. Those who purchased land were required to build a home on their property and develop the land. At that time, “develop” meant to clear the land of trees, shrubs, and rocks to make it suitable for farming.
Greenhouses became established over the years, but it’s not possible to assign exact dates.

The farms and greenhouses were replaced by homes as Milwaukee’s border moved south. Truck farming continued after World War II, but by 1960 most of the greenhouses were gone. Today, the Tippecanoe neighborhood’s boundaries are Morgan Avenue (north), Layton Avenue (south), Sixth Street (west), and the City of St. Francis (east).

Two greenhouses still exist on the south side, Custom Grown on Sixth Street, south of Bolivar on the old Louis Budzien & Sons Greenhouse property, and Donald Hahlbeck Greenhouses, on Twentieth Street, north of Layton.

In the late 1880s, retired Great Lakes Sea Captain John Saveland established two subdivisions north of Howard Avenue. They were Lincoln Park, which was west of Howell Avenue, and Bunker Hill, which was east of Howell Avenue. He hoped that they would become residential suburbs.

Around 1891, Saveland himself moved to Lincoln Park, where his house still stands, 3723 S. First St., next to Saveland Park.

In 1893 he opened the Tippecanoe Amusement Hall and Tippecanoe Lake, present day Saveland Park. By choosing the name Tippecanoe, Saveland was expressing his political party preference. The name soon included the entire area around Howell and Howard avenues.
Captain John Saveland’s Tippecanoe Amusement Hall was converted to the Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church, 125 W. Saveland Ave. in 1917. The dance hall/amusement hall closed in 1915, according to an article published in 1990 by the St. Francis Historical Society. COURTESY Ron Winkler

The amusement hall was built on the foundation of Isaac Austin’s barn. Later the hall was remodeled, in the English Gothic style, to become the Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church. The fieldstone foundation of the original barn is still clearly visible. The streetcar line was extended south to his subdivisions, which at that time were located in a rural district.
Saveland liked the Tippecanoe name with its connection to President Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893). President Harrison and Saveland were both Republicans. Harrison’s grandfather, William Henry Harrison, was President in 1841, but he died of pneumonia only 32 days after his inauguration. William Harrison was the hero of the “Battle of Tippecanoe” in 1811, near today’s Lafayette, Ind. His campaign slogan “Tippecanoe and Tyler too!” was a reminder of his war exploits and included the name of his running mate John Tyler.

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