3908

FNPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 10024-0018

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name 16th Street Viaduct
other names/site number James E. Groppi Unity Bridge

2. Location

street & number North 16th Street from West Clybourn Street to West Pierce Street N/A **not for publication**
city or town Milwaukee N/A **vicinity**
state Wisconsin **code** WI **county** Milwaukee **code** 079 **zip code** 53204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _ nationally X statewide _ locally. (_See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Daniel A. Kenkmann 3/21/2019
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

X entered in the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
__ determined eligible for the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
__ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
__ removed from the National Register.
__ other, (explain:)

Barbara Wyatt
Signature of the Keeper

5-7-19
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as as apply)

	private
X	public-local
	public-State
	public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

	building(s)
	district
X	structure
	site
	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing	noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Other: steel girder bridge

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE
walls
roof
other STEEL, CONCRETE

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

_ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

_ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

_ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

_ B removed from its original location.

_ C a birthplace or grave.

_ D a cemetery.

_ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

_ F a commemorative property.

_ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1967-1968

Significant Dates

1967

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

City of Milwaukee

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):
- _ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- _ previously listed in the National Register
- _ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _ designated a National Historic landmark
- _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- _ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
- X State Historic Preservation Office
- _ Other State Agency
- _ Federal Agency
- X Local government
- X University
- Other

Name of repository: City of Milwaukee Dept. of Public Works

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.1 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	424000	4765235	3			
2	16	423980	4763932	4			

☐ See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Robert W. Blythe/Historian				
organization				**date**	April 16, 2018
street & number	4449 North Monticello Avenue			**telephone**	773-463-1840
city or town	Chicago	**state**	IL	**zip code**	60625

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	City of Milwaukee				
organization	841 North Broadway, #501			**date**	
street & number				**telephone**	414-286-2489
city or town	Milwaukee	**state**	WI	**zip code**	53202

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Summary Paragraph

Opened in 1929, the 16th Street Viaduct (Wisconsin Department of Transportation state inventory # B-40-550-86) is a 3,924-foot-long, 79-span, steel girder structure with a concrete deck, used by motor vehicles and pedestrians. It runs north-south in the city of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, over the Menomonee River Valley. The viaduct extends from West Clybourn Street on the north to West Pierce Street on the south and spans several east-west streets, tracks of the Canadian National Railway, and the Menomonee River. The portion of the viaduct that crosses the river is a 150-foot-long double-leaf bascule bridge with a grated steel deck.[1]

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

From north to south, the viaduct spans the East-West Freeway (Interstate 94), West St. Paul Avenue, West Mt. Vernon Avenue, the Menomonee River, the Hank Aaron State Trail, West Canal Street, South 19th Street, tracks of the Canadian National Railway, and Bruce Street. The final southern portion of the viaduct from West Pierce Street to just south of Bruce Street rests on an earthen ramp with concrete abutments. The viaduct's steel supports (known to engineers as bents) begin at this point and extend to south edge of the East-West Freeway. The portion of the viaduct spanning the East-West Freeway is carried on two concrete bents.

Two ramps branch off from the viaduct on the south side of the river. On the east, a 13-span ramp supported by steel bents extends from the viaduct to Emmber Lane. On the west, a short concrete ramp connects to the parking deck of the Potawatomi Casino. At West St. Paul Avenue on the north side and West Canal Street on the south side, a pair of steel pedestrian staircases descend from the viaduct deck. Slightly north of Canal Street on the west side of the viaduct is a covered staircase that provides access to Marquette University athletic facilities that are west of the viaduct on the south bank of the river.

The viaduct was constructed in 1928-1929 and formally opened October 24, 1929. The viaduct replaced an earlier 1895 structure that had become inadequate to handle increased traffic and heavier vehicles. Construction costs were $1,850,000. At the time of construction, the Menomonee Valley was a well-established industrialized corridor.

The out-to-out width of the viaduct is 67 feet, 10 inches, with a 56-foot-wide roadway and a 5-foot-11-inch-wide sidewalk on each side. The viaduct is made up of 79 spans. Supporting the viaduct deck is a

[1] This description is based on "North 16th Street Viaduct Construction History" and construction drawings furnished by the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works, personal communications from Jerrel Krushcke, structural design manager, City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works, and "Waits a Year to Get Viaduct," *Milwaukee Journal,* Oct. 25, 1929.

succession of 15-inch-wide bents in groups of three arrayed transversally to the deck. Each bent rests on a reinforced concrete pier. The center to center distance from the outer bents of each set of three is 43 feet. Transverse bracing, consisting of steel members in an X-shape, is present between bents. Brackets 11 feet long extend from the stringers of the deck on each side of the viaduct. These support the outer portions of the roadway and the sidewalks.

As built, the viaduct had two operator's houses with controls for raising and lowering the bascule portion. These were octagonal in plan, with windows in all eight walls, and clad in copper. One was just north of the bascule on the west side and the other just south of the bascule on the east side. Streetcar tracks running in both directions were laid into the pavement and trolley wires were suspended from three steel arches that spanned the roadway. Four trolley stop shelters were built, two between piers three and four and two between piers 52 and 53. These were detailed like the operator's houses and clad in copper. Original lighting consisted of fluted steel columns, 26 feet high, with globes suspended on aluminum brackets over the roadway. The original balustrades were of vertical steel tubing. As of this writing, the viaduct has cobra-head-style aluminum light poles and concrete parapet walls surmounted by aluminum chain-link fencing.

When the viaduct was constructed, Pierce Street was the dividing line between 16th Street to the north and 11th Avenue to the south. In the 1930s, 11th Avenue was renamed South 16th Street. In 1999, 16th Street south of Pierce Street was renamed César Chavez Drive.[2] In 1988, the viaduct was rededicated as the James E. Groppi Unity Bridge.

Alterations to the Viaduct

As is expected in a 90-year-old structure, the viaduct's roadway and sidewalks have periodically been resurfaced.

Changes Prior to 1967
Between 1947 and 1952, the streetcar tracks and the three steel trolley arches were removed. It is likely that three of the trolley stop shelters were also removed at this period, although no documentation of the removals could be located. In 1958, a section of the East-West Freeway (Interstate 94) was constructed beneath the viaduct just south of West Clybourn Street. The two northernmost sets of three steel bents were removed at that time and replaced with a three-column concrete bent in the median of the freeway. In 1964, the city removed the operator's house at the northwest side of the bascule, leaving the one on the southeast end to operate the bascule.

[2] Milwaukee Public Library website, http://www.mpl.org/blog/now/october-25-1996-milwaukee-honors-hispanic-hero-cesar-chavez.

Changes After 1968
In 1986, the city carried out a major renovation of the viaduct. The original fluted light standards were removed and replaced with cobra-head-style aluminum light poles. The original tube steel fencing was removed and replaced with a concrete parapet wall topped by an inwardly curving aluminum chain-link fence. The last trolley stop shelter between piers 52 and 53 was removed. At this time, the city replaced the surfaces of the roadway and sidewalks and substituted new steel girders in the viaduct deck as needed. In 1994, Marquette University built a covered stairway on the south bank of the river, just north of West Canal Street on the west side of the viaduct. This stairway provides pedestrian access from the viaduct to the Marquette University Valley Fields and Shimek Memorial Track & Field Facility on the south bank of the river. The stairway structure is brick and steel with mostly open sides and is covered by a pyramidal standing-seam metal roof. In 2004, structural improvements were made on the portion of the viaduct spanning the East-West Freeway. The transverse steel girders supporting the viaduct roadway were replaced with concrete girders. The 1958 three-column bent was replaced by a new four-column bent in the median and a new four-column bent added just south of the freeway. Gridded steel fencing was installed on the portion of the viaduct that spans the freeway.

Integrity Discussion

The viaduct gains its significance from historic events that occurred on and around it, not from its design characteristics. Therefore, the most important aspects of integrity for this property are location, setting, feeling, and association. While integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are of lesser importance, most of those characteristics remain. Integrity of location is present: This is the same viaduct, in the same location, where the open housing marches of 1967-1968 took place. Integrity of design, materials and workmanship are somewhat reduced by the replacement in 1986 of the streetlight poles and tube steel fencing that were present during the period of significance. The structural elements of the viaduct—its steel bents, its bascule bridge, and its concrete decking—remain. Also remaining is the operator's house that was present in 1967-1968. It is in the nature of roadways to be periodically resurfaced, and resurfacings of the viaduct do not compromise its integrity.

Integrity of setting is somewhat compromised by the loss of some of the industrial and warehouse buildings that surrounded the viaduct in 1967-1968. Given its scale and prominent location in the largest urban center in Wisconsin, this bridge is a prominent feature in the landscape. Cities are dynamic environments and changes to surrounding buildings (both additions and subtractions), structures and other features of the urban setting are to be expected, and some of that change has happened in the vicinity of the viaduct. Some large structures, like the five-story, 1920 Milwaukee Paper Box Company, at the southern end of the viaduct, remain and contribute to the integrity of

setting.[3]

The presence of the covered stairs leading to the Marquette University athletic facilities (1994) and the 21-story Potawatomi Hotel (2014) also reduce integrity of setting. With these exceptions, the views from the viaduct are similar to the views during the period of significance.

Given integrity of location and sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, the viaduct retains integrity of feeling and association to convey the significance of the open housing marches of 1967-1968 and their place in the history of Milwaukee's civil rights movement.

[3] Milwaukee Paper Box Company National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Dec. 18, 2013, https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/13000956.pdf.

Summary Paragraph

The 16th Street Viaduct is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the state level under Criterion A for its significance in the area of Social History and Ethnic Heritage/Black for its associations with the Civil Rights Movement in Milwaukee and Wisconsin. Opened in 1929, the viaduct connected the predominantly African American near north side with the historically all-white south side of Milwaukee. The valley of the Menomonee River was a considerable geographical barrier such that the south side and the near north side developed almost as two separate cities. The 16th Street Viaduct, leading from the heart of the northside African American community to the south side, came to symbolize deeper racial and socio-economic divisions in Milwaukee. Discriminatory practices by real estate agents, landlords, lending institutions, and the federal government prevented African Americans from renting or purchasing homes on the south side, and in many other all-white Milwaukee neighborhoods. Beginning in August 1967 and continuing into March 1968, Father James E. Groppi, a prominent Wisconsin civil rights activist and Catholic priest, and the Youth Council of the Milwaukee Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) conducted 200 open housing marches, a number of which crossed the viaduct. Some of the marches into the south side attracted thousands of white opponents of open housing. During the first two marches, thousands of whites confronted the marchers, some shouted racist slogans and others threw rocks, bottles, and debris at them. On those two nights, the demonstrators were trotting or running the last few hundred feet when they returned from the south side of the viaduct.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1967-1968 open housing campaign is one of the two most significant civil rights campaigns in Wisconsin history. Only the long effort to integrate Milwaukee's public schools can be considered more important. The open housing campaign exemplifies the differences between northern civil rights efforts and the better known campaigns in the American south. Legislated segregation in the South presented a more clear-cut moral issue than northern segregation, which typically resulted from residential patterns and long-standing customary practices. It was often more of a challenge to rally support in opposition to northern "de facto" segregation. Catholic priests and nuns played an important part in the Milwaukee open housing effort. Father James Groppi was one of Wisconsin's most significant civil rights leaders. In addition to helping to lead the open housing campaign, Groppi led demonstrations in other Wisconsin cities and at the state capitol in Madison. Groppi's activities are representative of the substantial contribution of Catholic clergy to the modern civil rights movement, especially in northern cities. The open housing campaigns in Milwaukee and other cities played an important role in the April 1968 passage of a federal open housing law and a tough Milwaukee open housing ordinance. While *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* does not have a contextual

study unit for Civil Rights or the more recent history of Black Ethnic Heritage, these are chapters that warrant further study and inclusion in future revisions to this document.

The period of significance for the 16th Street Viaduct is 1967-1968, the period that the open housing marches took place.

Development of the City of Milwaukee

By 1833, one-sided treaties with the Menominee, Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa tribes had opened present-day southeast Wisconsin to Anglo-American settlement. A small fur-trading outpost already existed in the region, at the point where the Milwaukee River enters Lake Michigan, about 40 miles north of the Illinois state line. The basin of the Milwaukee River at this spot offered the best natural harbor on the western shores of the lake, and the trading post grew into the city of Milwaukee. From the 1830s, sharp-eyed investors from New England and New York State saw the potential for growing wheat and shipping it to eastern markets from Milwaukee via the Great Lakes and the newly opened Erie Canal, which connected Lake Erie with the Hudson River. These "Yankees" took the lead in organizing the town of Milwaukee in 1839 and ensuring that it was chartered as a city in 1846.[4]

Milwaukee quickly emerged as the major entrepôt for the wheat grown in its hinterlands. At first the rivers and plank roads converging on the city brought in the crops; beginning in the 1840s, railroads improved transportation to and from Milwaukee. Other industries based on agricultural production and stock raising – flour milling, meat packing, and leather tanning—developed in the decades prior to the Civil War. In 1840, Milwaukee County had a population of 5,605, most of it within what would soon become the city limits. The city's population then rose from 20,061 in 1850 to 45,246 in 1860. Large numbers of German immigrants began arriving in the city in the 1840s joining migrants from the eastern part of the United States. Smaller numbers of the Irish also arrived, many of them working to build and maintain the railroads. Within a few decades, German-Americans were largely integrated into the city's social and business elite. The Germans also brought with them an industry—beer brewing—that would become emblematic of Milwaukee.[5]

In the last third of the nineteenth century, meat packing, leather tanning, and brewing continued to grow. Flour milling remained important but began to decline in importance after 1875. A host of new industries arose, notably the production of iron and steel; the fabrication of all kinds of metal products; machine tool making; and shoe, boot, and harness making. Heavy industry concentrated largely on the

[4] Robert C. Nesbit, *Wisconsin: a History,* 2nd ed. revised and updated by William F. Thompson (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1989), 100-102; John Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee.*. Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999.
[5] Gurda, 79-87, 100-101.

lakefront. The shores of the Milwaukee River and its tributary, the Menomonee (running west from the center of town), filled in with lighter industry and warehousing activity. The Menomonee Valley began to be crowded with tanneries, ice houses, lumber and coal yards, meat-packing plants, breweries, and the extensive shops of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad.[6]

The growth of industry in the later nineteenth century brought a sharp increase in immigration. While Germans and Irish continued to arrive, from the late 1870s, the influx was increasingly from eastern and southern Europe. The majority were Poles, with lesser numbers of Italians, Serbs, Slovaks, Croats, Greeks, and European Jews. In addition, the production of heavy machinery was added to the existing roster of industries. By 1910, 57 percent of the city's labor force was involved in manufacturing. In that year, the foreign-born and their children made up 78.6 percent of Milwaukee's population of 373,857. Industry thrived during the First World War and the 1920s, suffered during the Great Depression, and then came roaring back during World War II and the postwar boom. The city's reliance on industry continued through the 1960s, when it began a decline that turned into a rout in the 1980s. Milwaukee's population reached its peak of 741,324 in 1950, when it was America's 11th largest city. The 2016 population was estimated to be 595,047, and the city was then the 31st largest in the country.[7]

African Americans were present in the city from its earliest days, but remained a very small percentage of the population until the late 1940s. Blacks in 1910 numbered just 980, constituting 0.3 % of the population. In 1930, the number had risen only to 7,501, or 1.3% of the population. By contrast, the African American populations in Chicago had reached 7 percent by 1930.[8] As described below, the city's African American population grew dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s.

Housing Patterns in Milwaukee

In Milwaukee, each nationality tended at first to settle in a particular area of the city. Once an ethnic neighborhood became established, later arrivals naturally gravitated to it. Getting settled was always easier where there were ties of language and kinship. Germans originally settled on the north side and Anglo Americans on the east side, although it was not long before many members of these groups dispersed to other areas. Poles settled almost exclusively on the south side, although a substantial minority of other Eastern Europeans, Germans, and others was always intermixed. The Irish initially were heavily represented in the Third Ward, which later became predominantly Italian. Greeks lived

[6] Gurda, 117-118, 123-126; Gerd Korman, *Industrialization, Immigrants, and Americanizers; The View from Milwaukee, 1866-1921* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967), 17.
[7] Gurda, 167-175, 180;
[8] Patrick Jones, *Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 14-15; Gurda, 257

just north of downtown, and Serbians gravitated to Walker's Point. The small African American population at first lived in an area of about 75 blocks northwest of downtown. In 1930, this area was roughly bounded by Brown Avenue to the north, 3rd Street to the east, Juneau Street to the south, and 12th Street to the west. This neighborhood eventually became known as the "Inner Core." The black population was confined to this small area of the city, but before the 1940s, these blocks were by no means 100 percent African American. The Inner Core in the 1930s and 1940s still had many residents of German, Eastern European, Greek, and Jewish origins.[9]

Milwaukee's ethnic neighborhoods developed strong identities. Many European immigrants were Roman Catholics, and the parish church became the anchor of community identity. The church was not only a spiritual home, but often educated the neighborhood's children and provided social services and recreation. Parishes usually had a strong ethnic identity, and an Italian, for example, often was not welcome in a church serving a congregation with Irish origins. Many immigrants, the Poles in particular, bought their own homes as soon as they could, and home ownership further cemented a family's attachment to a neighborhood. As historian Patrick Jones has observed "ethnic identity was rooted directly in a sense of place."[10]

Milwaukee's African American population expanded dramatically after World War II. The mechanization of southern cotton agriculture pushed thousands off the southern land, and the availability of entry-level factory jobs in Milwaukee attracted them to the city. The city's African American population jumped from approximately 13,000 in 1940, to 21,772 in 1950, and then to 62,458 in 1960, when blacks were 8.6 % of the total. The in-migration continued in the 1960s, and by 1970, African Americans numbered 105,088 and were 14.6% of the population. The rapid growth severely strained the ability of the black community's institutions to welcome and acclimate the new arrivals.[11]

As the black population grew, the Inner Core expanded to the north and west. The Milwaukee River was a natural barrier to expansion on the east, and a growing central business district restricted movement to the south. Little by little, previously all-white areas on the northern and western edges of the Inner Core became majority black. Unscrupulous real estate agents exploited this trend with a practice known as "block-busting." An agent would sell one or two homes to African American families in an all-white block, often at an inflated price. The agent would then tell other white owners that the area was going black, leading to panic selling by many white owners. Typically, when a block

[9] Joe W. Trotter Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 67, 178; Jack Dougherty, *More than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 11-12.
[10] Jones, 16.
[11] Gurda. 361

became about 30 percent African American, the remaining white owners would flee. This phenomenon did allow African American families with a steady income to buy better-maintained properties in these fringe areas. Poorer black families, though, were left in the older blocks of the Inner Core, in dilapidated, overcrowded buildings.[12]

A handful of middle-class African Americans were able to buy homes in white neighborhoods. Working-class blacks, however, were excluded from the white working-class neighborhoods where they could afford to rent or buy. The south side of the city, with a population of about 300,000 in 1960, had a large inventory of the kind of housing that a working-class family could afford. Many southside houses contained a lower floor that was offered for rent by the homeowner. A number of practices enforced this strict color line. Until the late 1940s, most Milwaukee house deeds included restrictive covenants that barred sale to non-whites. Although the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948 declared restrictive covenants illegal and unenforceable, their legacy lingered. In addition, lending institutions and the Federal Housing Authority, which guaranteed many mortgage loans, refused to lend to blacks. Finally, there was an unspoken understanding among landlords and real estate agents that blacks would not be given leases in white neighborhoods.[13] By the mid-1960s, Milwaukee had an African American population that was confined to a limited area of older, largely dilapidated housing, but the city also was developing a civil rights movement.

The 1960s Milwaukee Civil Rights Movement

Milwaukee had seen some civil rights activism prior to the middle 1960s, but less than other cities with larger African American populations. Milwaukee African Americans established chapters of the NAACP and the Urban League (UL) in 1919, not long after these organizations came into being nationally. The NAACP had a broad agenda, seeking equal political, educational, economic, and social rights for blacks and other minorities. The Urban League concentrated on finding employment, housing, and economic opportunities for blacks moving into cities. Throughout their early decades, both chapters in Milwaukee sought to advance the goal of equality largely through private persuasion among white leaders. Milwaukee's first recorded civil rights rally occurred on June 28, 1941, when approximately 350 African Americans marched peacefully through downtown streets. The march, supported by both the NAACP and UL chapters, sought to end job discrimination and had no immediate follow-up.[14]

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[12] William F. Thompson, *History of Wisconsin: Continuity and Change, 1940*-1965 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1988),352-353; "Buying Surges at Edge of Core," *Milwaukee Journal,* Apr. 21, 1968
[13] Thompson, 353; Trotter, 71; Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the* North (New York: Random House, 2008), 208.
[14] Dougherty, 9-10; NAACP website, http://www.naacp.org/oldest-and-boldest/.

Nationwide, nonviolent, direct-action civil rights protests became more prominent in the 1950s, notably in Montgomery, Alabama, where a year-long boycott of city buses led to their desegregation in December 1956. In Milwaukee, the killing of a 22-year-old black man by a white police officer in February 1958 drew an angry reaction from the African American community. It also underscored some of the divisions within that community. An attempted police cover-up of the killing was condemned at several meetings of three to four hundred people. A group led by Rev. R. L. Nathan of New Hope Baptist Church urged a large "Prayer of Protest" march on downtown to protest police brutality. More conservative African American ministers, fearing unruly demonstrators and a white backlash, persuaded Lathan to call off the march. In the spring, when the situation had calmed, a small demonstration of about 75 people occurred in the Inner Core. Lathan's call for a mass demonstration was an indication that some Milwaukee African Americans were beginning to favor more assertive tactics in the fight for equality. The community was also inspired by news coverage of black youth directly confronting segregation in the South, with freedom riders on buses and lunch counter sit-ins. Another sign of growing militancy in Milwaukee was the formation in July 1963 of a local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). An interracial group, CORE had been founded in Chicago in 1942 and took an active part in most of the civil rights actions of the 1960s.[15] The growing anger and impatience among Milwaukee blacks would be tapped and marshaled in several direct-action campaigns in the mid-1960s.

The frustration of the Milwaukee African American community in the 1960s was heightened by its lack of political power. Ward lines were drawn so as scatter the black vote, and it was not until 1956 that the first African American was elected to the Common Council. This was attorney Vel Phillips, elected in 1956. She was the first African American and the first woman on the council; it would be 12 years before another African American was elected. The 15 members of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors were elected at large, which made it difficult for African Americans to compete successfully. Henry Maier, Milwaukee's mayor from 1960 to 1988, found the basis of his support among white ethnic voters and had little incentive to take strong positions on issues of concern to his black constituents.[16]

The first large-scale direct-action civil rights campaign in Milwaukee focused on integrating the city's public schools. Because residential segregation was so prevalent and the school board was committed to the concept of neighborhood schools, Milwaukee's schools were highly segregated. Before the mid-1960s, school integration had been a low priority for the city's black leaders. They had achieved considerable success in getting more African American teachers hired and wanted to protect those gains. Attorney Lloyd A. Barbee, who moved to the city only in 1962, became the leader of a 14-year

[15] Jones, 36-39; Dougherty, 61-62, 92.
[16] Dougherty, 73; Jones, 21-22, 29, 51, 176; Bill Dahlk, *Against the Wind: African Americans & the Schools in Milwaukee, 1962-2002* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 24.

effort to integrate the schools. Barbee envisioned a two-pronged campaign: he would apply pressure on the school board through public appeals and direct-action protests, but also pursue legal action if needed. The board appointed a Special Committee on Equality of Educational Opportunity, chaired by board member Harold Story. Story began a series of hearings that focused more on compensatory education for black students than integrating classrooms. At a January 1964 meeting, Story attempted to isolate Lloyd Barbee from other black leaders, provoking a walk-out by all the African American representatives in the room.[17]

The black community saw Story's actions as an insult, and Barbee's dramatic walk-out galvanized opinion. On May 1, 1964, Barbee organized the Milwaukee United School Integration Committee (MUSIC), a coalition of groups and individuals committed to desegregating the public schools. Forming a coalition was a shrewd move that helped unite the more conservative old-line leaders and emerging militants in a common cause. On that same May 1st, 600 people packed St. Mark Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and endorsed a one-day boycott of the schools, which was intended to draw attention to their segregated status. MUSIC conducted the boycott on May 18, 1964, and followed it up within another in October 1965. A Catholic priest, Father James E. Groppi, became the second vice president of MUSIC in spring 1965. The boycotts and other protest demonstrations produced no integration efforts on the part of the school board. Four months prior to the second boycott, Lloyd Barbee had filed an action in federal court charging the school board with deliberately promoting segregation through its policies and practices. By the beginning of 1966, MUSIC had moved away from street protests and began devoting most of its energies to trial preparation.[18]

The school integration case navigated a torturous path through the federal courts. The trial in the case did not begin until September 1973, and only in January 1976 was a ruling handed down. On January 19, 1976, Federal Judge John Reynolds ruled that segregation had been "intentionally created and maintained" by the school board and ordered it to come up with an integration plan. An integration plan centering on magnet schools and voluntary busing was eventually adopted. Involuntary busing was used sparingly as a last resort. The integration plan had some initial successes, but ultimately failed to slow the exodus of white families from Milwaukee. Racial integration of school systems has generally proven impossible without a stable white population. In fiscal years 2011 through 2015, the ethnic make-up of the student body in Milwaukee schools has remained largely constant: 55% African American; 24% Hispanic; 15% white; 5% Asian; 1% other. Although the school integration effort did not achieve all of its goals, it united a good portion of the African American community and introduced new, more militant tactics to the city's civil rights movement. It was the first sustained

[17] Lloyd Barbee, interview by Jack Dougherty, July 12 & Aug. 14, 1995, More Than One Struggle Oral History Project Records, box 2, folder 4, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Dahlk, 10, 74, 83-84; Dougherty, 92; Jones, 101.
[18] Jones, 64-65; Dougherty, 92, 101; Dahlk, 73, 83-84; "Defacto School Segregation Fight Is Top Story for 1964," *Milwaukee Star*, Jan. 9, 1965.

large-scale direct-action civil rights campaign in the city, and it paved the way for future campaigns, some of them led by Father James Groppi.

The Emergence of Father Groppi as a Civil Rights Activist

James E. Groppi was born Nov. 16, 1930, to parents who had emigrated from Italy. His family ran a grocery store in Bay View, a working-class southside Milwaukee neighborhood with a predominantly Irish and Slavic population. Before World War II, Italians were low in the pecking order of nationalities in Milwaukee, and Groppi had epithets like "Dago" hurled at him growing up. His father Giocondo Groppi, though, practiced tolerance and would not allow any racial or ethnic slurs in his house. James Groppi felt the call toward a religious vocation in high school and attended St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, becoming ordained as a priest in 1959.[19]

While still in seminary, Groppi worked at a summer camp for African American youth near the Hillside Housing Project in Milwaukee's Inner Core. It was there that he began to be concerned about the poverty, neglect, and racism that the city's black population faced. Several of Milwaukee's parishes were majority black by the time Groppi was ordained, and he asked to be assigned to one of them. Instead, he was assigned to St. Veronica Parish on the south side. In 1963 he was able to transfer as assistant pastor at St. Boniface at 2609 North 11th Street in the Inner Core.[20] Father Groppi threw himself into his new role, developing a strong bond with the black youth that he taught and counseled. He strongly supported the civil rights actions taking place in the South, and in spring 1961, he made his first southern trip. At the time, young blacks and some whites were challenging Jim Crow racism with lunch counter sit-ins, freedom rides on buses, and voter registration drives across the region. Groppi made several additional trips south between 1961 and 1965. On these trips, he gained organizing experience and visited "freedom houses," safe spaces where activists could meet, eat, and sleep.[21]

Father Groppi participated in the Selma to Montgomery March to secure voting rights for southern blacks. He rallied with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and 25,000 others in the Alabama capitol in March 1965. He returned to Milwaukee with a renewed commitment to directly confronting the racial injustices he saw at home. It was then that he joined MUSIC and became its second vice president. Shortly thereafter, he began participating in demonstrations. Police arrested him for blocking a school bus, Groppi's first arrest and the first for a Milwaukee priest. Groppi took an active part in MUSIC's school boycott in October 1965 and led 300 protesters in a march to the home of school board

[19] Jones, 93-94; "James Groppi Dies of Cancer," *Milwaukee Journal,* Nov. 4, 1985.
[20] St. Boniface Church was razed in 1975 to make way for a new building for North Division High School.
[21] Jones, 94-96.

president John F. Foley.[22] Groppi's planning and organizing experience in the South and with MUSIC helped make him a very effective leader of the open housing campaign.

In late spring 1965, the Youth Council of the Milwaukee NAACP asked Father Groppi to become its advisor. An auxiliary to the adult NAACP branch, the Youth Council was founded in 1947. Previously known mainly for sponsoring social activities, the Youth Council in 1965 was moving in a more militant direction. The group drew inspiration from the strong stand young southern blacks were taking. In addition, a policy decision in 1965 removing the Youth Council from the supervision of the adult branch gave it a wider field of action. After some initial hesitation, Groppi accepted the advisor position. For Groppi this was a chance to push for social change with a group unaffiliated with the church. Father Groppi and the Youth Council members developed a deep bond. Groppi provided a great deal of valuable advice on strategy and tactics, but all decisions were made by nine officers of the group. Beyond attacking specific injustices, Groppi believed that the young African Americans would learn valuable leadership skills by planning and carrying out protests and other activities. A number of Youth Council members had participated in the last phases of MUSIC's street actions, notably the blocking of school buses. By early 1966, the Youth Council was committed to militant, non-violent action. The group established a Freedom House in a dilapidated building at 2026 North Fifth Street in the Inner Core as a meeting place and refuge. Later, in January 1967, the Freedom House moved a new location at 1316 North 15th Street.[23]

As its first target for a direct-action campaign, the Youth Council chose the whites-only membership policy of the powerful Milwaukee Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Eagles many white Milwaukeeans in the 1960s failed to grasp the implications of the Eagles policy that excluded African Americans. The right to freely choose one's companions in social situations was widely believed to be inviolable. The problem was the unique role of the Eagles Club in Milwaukee. The chapter had 5,400 members, making it the second largest in the country. Many of Milwaukee's political, labor, and business leaders were Eagles Club members, including 17 circuit and county judges, 10 of the city's 19 aldermen, and Mayor Maier. Inevitably, matters of public policy were discussed and important contacts were made at club functions. Barring blacks from these associations truly made them second-class citizens. In addition, the membership of so many public officials in a club with a racist policy cast doubt on their ability to treat black Milwaukeeans fairly.[24]

[22] "James Groppi Dies of Cancer"; Jones, 102; "Father Groppi Leads 350 Pickets before Foley Home," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 19, 1965.
[23] "NAACP Youth Council No New Idea Here," *Milwaukee Journal,* Sep. 17, 1967; Jones, 113-117; "James Groppi Dies of Cancer."
[24] Jones, 119-120.

In February and March, 1966, Youth Council members picketed outside the Eagles Club building on West Wisconsin Avenue, but the media largely ignored the demonstrations. To underscore the problem of having public officials in the Eagles Club, the Youth Council and Groppi started planning to picket the homes of these members. Before any of these demonstrations took place, a bomb exploded in the offices of the Milwaukee Chapter of the NAACP on August 9. No one was hurt but doors and windows were blown out and several small fires ignited. The bombing outraged many in the black community and spurred more activism. The Youth Council responded by stationing several members armed with rifles in its Freedom House and selling lapel pins with the slogan "Burn Baby Burn." This increased militancy disturbed many white Milwaukeeans as well as some adult African American leaders. At the same time, many in the black community saw the Youth Council as making important strides toward self-respect and self-determination. Within days, NAACP Executive Director Roy Wilkins directed the Youth Council to stop selling the Burn Baby Burn lapel pins.[25]

In the wake of the NAACP bombing, the Youth Council during the week of August 13, 1966, sent letters to four judges asking them to resign from the Eagles Club. Three men refused outright while the fourth said he would not renew his membership when it lapsed. The Youth Council then began picketing in front of the home of Circuit Judge Robert Cannon in the suburb of Wauwatosa, just west of Milwaukee. The first nights of picketing were uneventful, but by the first weekend of protests, August 20 and 21, thousands of curious whites and a few hostile ones appeared. Some robed members of the Ku Klux Klan showed up and other individuals carried signs with racial slurs. On Saturday August 28, about 250 open housing demonstrators, one-quarter of them white, marched from Milwaukee to Wauwatosa, where they were greeted by 4,000 angry, shouting whites. Governor Warren Knowles had called in the National Guard by this point, and the guardsmen prevented any extensive bloodshed that night.[26]

The Eagles Club protests continued into the fall at Cannon's home and those of other public officials. Various attempts to mediate the dispute failed because the national Eagles leadership refused to talk to the NAACP. The Eagles did not drop their whites-only policy until the late 1970s. The Youth Council protests against the Eagles Club and the violent reactions against them made national news, with articles appearing in *Time* and the *New York Times.* Father Groppi was the focus of much of the coverage. The mainstream media played up the angle of a white priest identifying so strongly with African American youth. In consequence, the contributions of the Youth Council members sometimes

[25] "'Burn Baby Burn' Buttons Sold Here," "Groppi's Group Arms to Guard Building," *Milwaukee Journal*, Aug. 10, 1966; "NAACP Boss Calls Halt to Button Sale," *Milwaukee Journal,* Aug. 11, 1966; Dahlk, 109.
[26] "La Follette Announces Picket Curb," *Milwaukee Journal,* Sep. 1, 1966; Frank A. Aukofer, *City with a Chance* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1968), 99-103; Jones, 130-131.

were overlooked. The Eagles Club controversy coupled with a second summer of ghetto riots in a number of American cities made for a tense racial situation in Milwaukee.[27]

The tensions increased on October 4, 1966, when Father Groppi announced that the Youth Council had formed a new group called the Commandos. Groppi described the Commandos as an unarmed but militant group meant to enforce discipline at the Freedom House, keep order during demonstrations, and protect protesters from attack. The Commandos wore berets and specially printed T-shirts to distinguish them and their special role. The Youth Council made it quite clear that the Commandos would not initiate violence, but would defend themselves and demonstrators if attacked. The Commandos called their approach "not violence" to distinguish it from nonviolence, a philosophy that encouraged passive resistance only. With the Eagles Club protests going nowhere, Father Groppi announced as early as September 1966 that the next target of the Youth Council would be discrimination in housing.[28]

The 1967-1968 Open Housing Campaign

President Lyndon Johnson had hoped to get an open housing provision included in the 1966 federal Civil Rights Act, but failed. This left the issue to states and municipalities. Lloyd Barbee, originator of the school integration case and the sole African American in the Wisconsin General Assembly, introduced a strong open housing bill in 1965. He was unable to muster enough support for his measure, and the legislature in December 1965 passed a weak law that exempted buildings with fewer than five units and lacked an effective enforcement provision. In practice, the exemption meant that only about 25 percent of Milwaukee's rental units were subject to the law. Prior to 1965, Milwaukee had erected little public housing, and the construction of interstate highways had removed thousands of housing units that the city did almost nothing to replace. The blocks in the heart of the Inner Core became increasingly crowded, with two families sometimes forced to share an apartment. Alderwoman Vel Phillips had pushed for an open housing measure in the Common Council. She introduced an ordinance repeatedly, and each time hers was the only vote for the measure.[29]
Open housing campaigns of varying scope had been launched in hundreds of American cities by the mid-1960s. The vast majority of these focused on petition drives and moral persuasion rather than direct action. Direct-action tactics—marches that risked arrest, sit-ins, rallies—openly challenged segregation and had been widely used in the American South. Chapters of CORE in other cities had been out front in conducting sit-ins at rental offices and sending out "testers" to expose discrimination.

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[27] Jones, 129-131; "Milwaukee Clergy Split on Picketing Issue," *Milwaukee Sentinel,* Sep. 1, 1966; "Rights Protest Stirs Milwaukee," *New York Times,* Aug. 28, 1966;.
[28] "Groppi Says Next Target Is Housing," *Milwaukee Journal,* Oct. 15, 1966; Jones, 133.
[29] Jones, 174-176; Gurda, 366-367; "Urgency Lacking on Low Cost Housing," *Milwaukee Sentinel,* Apr. 24, 1968.

The Youth Council and Father Groppi knew of these efforts, thanks to the Milwaukee chapter of CORE and media coverage.[30]

Father Groppi and the Youth Council began the open housing campaign by picketing at the homes of six Milwaukee aldermen from May to July 1967. All six had some black constituents but had opposed an open housing ordinance. None of the aldermen agreed to change his vote on the local open housing ordinance. The city attorney declared that the weak state law had pre-empted municipal action, even though the state law encouraged cities to pass their own ordinances. On June 21, Groppi spoke to a rally of 200 people at St. Boniface. He said, "Either we get what we want in this city or we're going to turn this city upside down. And we're going to go down and see some of these white aldermen on the south side."[31]

Rioting in African American neighborhoods in more than 150 American cities in the summer of 1967 added to racial tensions in Milwaukee. The worst disturbances were in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan. The beating of a black cab driver by two white policemen on July 12 in Newark led to four days of rioting. When state police and national guardsmen had restored order, 26 were dead. Detroit erupted two weeks later. On July 23, police raided on an illegal after-hours club, drawing an angry crowd that started the rioting. The toll in Detroit was 43 dead, more than one thousand injured, and 7,000 arrested. Similar tensions between police and inner city blacks had long existed in Milwaukee. On May 13, 1967, the Youth Council had led 450 in a march against police brutality to the city's Public Safety Building.[32]

Milwaukee experienced its own deadly rioting in late July. On Saturday, July 30, police broke up a fight in front of an Inner Core bar. The crowd that had gathered at the scene broke some windows and tossed trash cans. Rumors of police beatings spread and the following night, some 300 Inner Core residents took to the streets, smashing windows, starting fires, and doing some limited looting. The rioters were a distinct minority, and dozens of Inner Core residents worked to put out the fires and restore calm. After midnight on Monday morning, a tragic incident caused two deaths. A white man drove past the home of African American janitor John Tucker and shouted racial slurs and threats at some neighborhood residents who were standing talking. One witness claimed the man shot at her. Tucker grabbed a shotgun and shot at the car. A garbled police call brought officers to the scene, some in an unmarked car. Tucker opened fire, killing one policeman who had entered the house, and

[30] Sugrue, 283-285.
[31] "Youth Council Pickets Dineen Home," *Milwaukee Sentinel*,' May 27, 1967; "Protesters Find Erl Is at Home," *Milwaukee Sentinel,* July 7, 1967; "Groppi Vows to March into Suburbs," *Milwaukee Journal,* June 22, 1967.
[32] Jones, 160; Sugrue, 325.

severely wounding others. A 77-year-old woman in the house was also killed. In an unrelated incident, a looter was shot and killed; in all, 1,700 arrests were made.[33]

In retrospect, many observers believed that Mayor Maier's reaction to the rioting only made matters worse. Five hours after the first reports of violence, the mayor essentially shut the city down. He declared a state of emergency, imposed a round-the-clock curfew, ordered gas stations closed, suspended mail delivery, and got the governor to send in the National Guard. Suburb officials issued similar orders, and the metropolitan area was essentially shut down on Monday, July 31. As historian John Gurda has observed, in the wake of Maier's actions, "many city and suburban residents developed a siege mentality."[34]

16th Street Viaduct March

Racial tension remained high in Milwaukee when Father Groppi and the Youth Council in late August announced plans for an open housing march across the 16th Street Viaduct to Kosciuszko Park in the heart of the south side. The 16th Street Viaduct, erected 1928-1929, is one of four that cross the Menomonee River Valley in the city. The river valley runs west to east, bisecting the city, and had become heavily industrialized early in the twentieth century. The valley had historically been a dividing line, but during the open housing campaign it took on a weighted significance. The south side of Milwaukee in 1967 was home to 300,000 working-class and lower-middle-class whites who were strongly attached to their homes and neighborhoods. People of Polish heritage were the largest group, perhaps a third of the total population. By the 1960s, these southside residents were watching as more affluent members of their community moved to the suburbs. They saw the city's tax base declining and streets that weren't being repaired. In addition, Milwaukee was deindustrializing and competition for jobs was fierce. There was a cultural component to south side anxiety as well. Southside whites had little contact with or understanding of African American culture. Some were out-and-out racists, and many more saw blacks as threats to their livelihood and stable neighborhoods.[35]

Marching to the south side was the sort of direct action that Groppi and the Youth Council believed was necessary to bring attention to the housing issue. The campaign was motivated more by a desire to improve housing conditions for blacks than by a desire among African Americans to live on the south side. The marchers anticipated some form of resistance and counted on it to expose bigotry. Milwaukee activists were well aware of the virulent resistance encountered by open housing demonstrators in Chicago in summer 1966. In that city, only 90 miles to the south, crowds of angry whites shouted racial slurs and some threw rocks when Martin Luther King Jr. led marchers into all-

[33] Jones, 144-145; Aukofer, 8-11; Gurda, 371.
[34] Gurda, 372-373.
[35] Gurda, 361-363; Aukofer, 109-110; Rozga, Margaret. "March on Milwaukee," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 90/4 (summer 2007):33-34, http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/wmh/id/49343..

white neighborhoods. In Milwaukee, pleas to the Common Council and the mayor had gone unheeded, and the Youth Council wanted to dramatically underscore the attitudes that confined African Americans to a small section of the city. Kosciuszko Park, named for a Polish hero of the American Revolution, held symbolic importance for Polish Americans. Groppi publically announced that the marchers would cross the viaduct, walk to Lincoln Avenue and then head east to Kosciuszko Park. The march route was published in the *Milwaukee Journal*, and in at least two black newspapers: the *Milwaukee Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*. Youth Council Commando Prentice McKinley told the *Defender* there would be a "black power" rally in Kosciuszko Park.[36]

The Youth Council's march to the south side took place on Monday, August 28, 1967. The city had refused to give the group a rally permit for Kosciusko Park, but did grant a picnic permit. About 200 demonstrators began the 3-mile march at the northern end of the 16th Street Viaduct at 6:25 pm. A small group from St. Veronica's, Father Groppi's old parish, welcomed them. As the marchers proceeded south on 16th Street, hundreds of whites, many of them teenaged, walked on the opposite sidewalk in tandem with the marchers. Some whites shouted "Go Back to Africa" and other racial slurs. A crowd of about 5,000 surrounded the park, and police with difficulty cleared a path into the picnic area. Shouts and jeers made speaking impossible, and the marchers left after about 15 minutes. A jeering crowd, throwing bottles and rocks, harassed the demonstrators all the way back to the south end of the viaduct. Police reinforcements then sealed off the viaduct behind the marchers.[37]

At a press conference Tuesday morning, Father Groppi announced that the demonstrators would march again that night, following the same route. Mayor Maier asked for a voluntary curfew and said that one interpretation of Groppi's actions was that he was "looking for noise and adulation." The mayor did not ask for any outside assistance to provide security for that night's demonstration.[38]

On Tuesday evening, August 29, about 250 marchers again crossed the 16th Street Viaduct to the south side. An estimated 13,000 whites were waiting along the march route and near Kosciusko Park. The marchers again were greeted with racial slurs and signs with offensive slogans. At the intersection of Eleventh Street and Lincoln Avenue, about 1,000 counterdemonstrators rushed the marchers. Some in the crowd beat marchers, and the Commandos fought back. Police drove the white attackers back with tear gas and repeated shotgun blasts fired into the air. Most of the demonstrators reached the park, where Father Groppi told them "You've shown you're willing to die for freedom." Someone tossed a cherry bomb at the demonstrators, injuring two girls, and the marchers began to head back north. As

[36] "March Set Tonight on South Side under Aegis of NAACP Youth Council," *Milwaukee Journal,* Aug. 28, 1967; "NAACP Youth Council to March on Southside," *Milwaukee Courier*, Aug. 26, 1967; "Milwaukee Rights Group to March in White Area," *Chicago Defender,* Aug. 26, 1967; Dahlk, 111-112; Sugrue, 418-420.
[37] "8,000 Taunt Rights Marchers on S. Side," *Milwaukee Journal,* Aug. 29, 1967; Jones, 169-170; Aukofer, 110-112.
[38] Aukofer, 113; Jones, 184-185.

the *Milwaukee Courier* noted: "If the march to Kosciusko park [sic] was terrifying, the march back was sheer hell." As the demonstrators made their way north, bottles, stones, bricks, and eggs rained down upon them. The jeering crowed followed the demonstrators all the way back to the southern end of the viaduct. The marchers were running as they approached the viaduct, and journalist Frank Aukofer noted that "they looked like refugees from a battle." In the aftermath, 22 injuries were reported, none serious.[39]

A handful of police officers escorted the demonstrators back to the Freedom House on North 15th Street. Marchers and neighborhood residents began to gather, and some castigated the police for not adequately protecting them on the south side. When a few individuals threw bottles and rocks at the police, officers responded by firing tear gas. Gas-choked Youth Council members ran out of the Freedom House, which soon was on fire. Police kept fire fighters away for 15 minutes, claiming that they had heard sniper fire that threatened the firemen. By the time firemen did arrive, the Freedom House was largely gutted. Youth Council members were convinced that the police had deliberately fired the tear gas canisters into the house to start a fire.[40]

After two nights of violence, Milwaukee seemed on the verge of all-out warfare. Most of the city's white leaders believed that Youth Council had made its point and the demonstrations should stop. On Wednesday, Mayor Maier declared a state of emergency and imposed a 30-day ban on marches or demonstrations between the hours of 4 pm and 9 am. The Youth Council and its supporters saw this as an abridgement of the right to free speech, and the NAACP joined the American Civil Liberties Union in trying to overturn the ban in federal court. Instead of defying the night-time ban by marching, Youth Council members gathered on the grounds of Freedom House on Wednesday night. When some strayed into the street, police waded in with night sticks flying and made 58 arrests. On the next night, Thursday, marchers left a rally at St. Boniface. Police quickly broke up the march and arrested another 137, including Father Groppi and Alderwoman Vel Phillips.[41]

By the end of the week, the national media were covering the events in Milwaukee. Camera crews from all three major television networks were in town. NAACP Field Secretary Syd Finley came to Milwaukee, and the organization called on members from other chapters to participate in demonstrations planned for the upcoming weekend. Comedian and activist Dick Gregory also came to Milwaukee. Mayor Maier on Friday announced that the night-time ban had served its purpose and would end Saturday morning. Over the course of the Labor Day weekend, September 2-4, more than a

[39] "Marchers Attacked by White Mob; Claim Police Burned Freedom House," *Milwaukee Courier*, Sep. 2, 1967; Jones, 170; Aukofer, 114-116..
[40] "Marchers Attacked by White Mob"; Jones, 3-4; Rozga, 35
[41] "Maier Orders 30 Day Ban on Night Demonstrations," *Milwaukee Journal,* Aug. 30, 1967; "New NAACP Rally Set after 58 Arrests," *Milwaukee Journal,* Aug. 31, 1967; Jones, 186-190.

half dozen separate marches took place. On Saturday more than 1,000 demonstrators, many from out of town, marched to city hall and then across the 16th Street Viaduct to the south side. Other marches went into some of the city's suburbs.[42]

Marches continued daily through the week of Labor Day and reached a peak the weekend of September 9 and 10. The National Council of Churches and the National Catholic Conference urged people to go to Milwaukee to support open housing and free speech rights. Hundreds of clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, answered the call. The substantial participation of Catholic clergy and laity was one aspect that set the northern civil struggle apart from it southern counterpart. Martin Luther King Jr. sent a telegram of support to Father Groppi. A Thursday night rally at St. Boniface drew 1,000 who heard speeches from Charles Evers, brother of slain Mississippi activist Medgar Evers, and the regional chair of the NAACP. Approximately 750 marchers crossed the 16th Street Viaduct and marched through the south side on Saturday. The largest demonstration of the open housing campaign came on Sunday when 5,000, including Dick Gregory, again crossed over the viaduct to the south side. This day, a group of about 200 whites followed the marchers and shouted slurs. Protests continued through and into the following weekend. A night march on Saturday, September 16 led by Dick Gregory brought 650 once more across the viaduct. These two weekends marked the height of the campaign in terms of numbers. Participation by out-of-towners then began to dwindle.[43]

The Youth Council and its supporters vowed that they would march for five years if necessary to get an open housing ordinance passed. In fact, the group continued daily marches for 200 days, into March 1968. Most were on the north side, downtown, or to an alderman's house, but occasionally the campaign returned to the south side. After September, the number participating ranged from a few dozen to about 200. In some of the later marches, whites were as much as 40 percent of the participants. As time went on, the St. Boniface school bus was used frequently to take Youth Council members to the site of a rally or the starting point of a march.[44]

Father Groppi was the focus of intense criticism in Milwaukee for his role in the open housing campaign. Some vocal Catholics called on Milwaukee Archbishop William Cousins to reign in Groppi. Within weeks of the beginning of the open housing campaign, opponents also began to organize, forming a group called the Milwaukee Citizens' Civic Voice. On September 13, a small group of whites marched north across the 16th Street Viaduct to the archbishop's home, demanding

[42] "1,000 March to South Side in Peaceful Demonstration," *Milwaukee Journal,* Sep. 3, 1967; "Milwaukee Rights War Is Like the Real Thing," *Chicago Defender,* Sep. 7, 1967; Jones, 190-191.
[43] "Open Housing Support Grows," *Milwaukee Journal,* Sep. 9, 1967; "Police Disperse White Mobs Here," *Milwaukee Journal,* Sep. 11, 1967; "Core Marchers Go South Again," *Milwaukee Journal,* Sep. 17, 1967; Jones, 194-196; Aukofer, 122.
[44] Jones, 196; "Groppi Leads March in 40th Day of Protest," *Milwaukee Journal,* Oct. 7, 1967/

that he restrict Father Groppi's activities. Throughout the open housing campaign, Archbishop Cousins defended Groppi's right to follow his conscience, as long as he broke no law. On the night of October 9, 1967, open housing marchers encountered a group of counter demonstrators on a north side street. Police kept the two groups on opposite sides of the street. When some of the Youth Council group ventured from the sidewalk onto the street, police pushed them back, using their clubs and arresting 13.[45]

Mayor Maier and the Common Council gave no ground on the open housing issue. The mayor feared that a strong Milwaukee ordinance would accelerate the flight of white families to the suburbs. He saw open housing as a metropolitan issue and promised to support an open housing ordinance only after a majority of suburban jurisdictions had passed one. By November 1967, the Citizens' Civic Voice group had collected 27,000 signatures to put a referendum before city voters that would postpone any action on open housing by the Common Council for two years. As the open housing marches continued into the fall, white business leaders were growing concerned over the city's image and its ability to attract visitors. The Youth Council added to the concerns by calling for a "Black Christmas." The group urged African Americans to buy no presents or decorations, but rather focus on religious observations and writing their representatives concerning civil rights issues. A number of observers believed trade in the central business district in the last three months of 1967 was down 20 to 25 percent from the preceding year.[46]

The courage shown by the open housing marchers and the business community's concern over the city's future were beginning to change some attitudes. Some executives privately urged the mayor and Common Council to move closer to the demonstrators' position. After approving the open housing referendum in late November, the Common Council on December 12 passed an ordinance that precisely followed the language of the state open housing law. The Youth Council and its supporters saw this as a meaningless gesture. On March 4, 1968, Federal Judge Robert Tehan ruled that the proposed referendum was unconstitutional. Ten days later, the Youth Council decided that the 200th open housing march would be the last. Several factors led to this decision. The threat of the referendum had been removed, marchers were growing fewer and fewer, and the housing issue had received tremendous press attention. In the last march on March 14, 1968, Father Groppi and Vel Phillips led about 325 through north side streets.[47]

[45] "Whites March to Chancery, Ask Action Against Groppi," *Milwaukee Journal,* Sep. 13, 1967; "13 Arrested, 41 Hurt in Housing March," *Milwaukee Courier,* Oct. 14, 1967;
[46] Jones, 196-198, 205; Dahlk, 112; "NAACP Calls for Black Christmas," *Milwaukee Courier,* Nov. 18, 1967.
[47] "Years of Marching Promised, If Needed," *Milwaukee Journal,* Dec. 13. 1967; Jones, 207.

"Fair Housing Act"
While the Milwaukee open housing campaign stalled, the U.S. Congress in the early months of 1968 was considering a civil rights bill. Conservative senators and the real estate lobby strongly resisted including a strong open housing section in the bill. Then, on April 4, an assassin shot down Martin Luther King Jr., the nation's leading civil rights activist, in Memphis. Riots occurred in dozens of inner cities, but not in Milwaukee. Father Groppi was among those who preached that violence was no way to honor King's memory. On Monday April 8, 15 to 20 thousand citizens participated in a memorial march for King to downtown Milwaukee. Thanks in part to the Commandos, there was no violence beyond a few broken windows. Martin Luther King's death and the open housing campaigns in Milwaukee and elsewhere may have changed some minds in Washington; Congress passed, and President Johnson on April 11 signed, the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Because of the act's strong open housing section, it is commonly known as the Fair Housing Act. On April 30, the Common Council passed an even tougher open housing ordinance, which applied to about 90 percent of the city's housing. The *Chicago Defender* observed it would have been difficult to imagine such an ordinance just one year previous. Within a few years, 50 Wisconsin municipalities had also passed open housing laws.[48]

After the Open Housing Campaign

The open housing campaign gave Father Groppi national, even international, status as a human rights activist. By the latter months of 1967, he was traveling across the country making speeches and television appearances. Early in 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. tapped Father Groppi, the Youth Council, and the Commandos to head up the midwest division of the Poor Peoples' Campaign. King's plan was to bring a multiracial group to Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1968 to pressure Congress and the nation to do more to address the economic and social needs of the poor. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference decided to go ahead with the effort following Dr. King's assassination. Father Groppi went to Atlanta in May and rallied with the southern contingent that was making its way to Washington. A sizable group of Commandos went to Washington where a tent camp called Resurrection City was set up on the National Mall. Resurrection City was plagued by rain, poor organization, petty crime, and hostile law enforcement. On June 24, police removed the campers from the mall, largely without incident. The demonstrators left without accomplishing any tangible results.[49]

A rising tide of Black Nationalism in the later 1960s led some to question Father Groppi's position as a white man advising young African Americans. Divisions were also arising within the Youth Council.

[48] Jones, 206-209; Civil Rights Act of 1968, P.L. 90-284; "Battle for Open Housing Despite Laws," *Chicago Defender,* May 18, 1968.
[49] Jones, 239-240; "City of Poor Shuts Peacefully," *New York Times,* June 23, 1968.

Some members wanted to continue direct-action tactics while others shifted to working with government agencies to develop and run job training and educational programs. Groppi gave up his advisor position in November 1968, and in February 1969, the Youth Council chose one of its own members, Nathaniel Harwell, as advisor. Harwell was 24 at the time and nearing the age when he could no long be a Youth Council member. Shifting to the advisor role allowed Harwell to continue his involvement with the group.[50]

By 1969, Groppi was taking an increasingly expansive view of social justice, becoming more active in protests against the Vietnam War and other causes. He agreed to co-chair the Milwaukee 14 Defense Committee. The committee supported and raised funds for 14 individuals who had burned 10,000 draft cards in Milwaukee. In fall 1969, the Commandos, and Father Groppi led the last sizable direct-action campaign of the civil rights era in Milwaukee, the Welfare Mothers March from Milwaukee to Madison. The march was planned in response to proposed cuts to Wisconsin's welfare programs. On September 21, 1969, a group of about 100 set off from Milwaukee. Once in Madison, the demonstrators set up a camp and on Sunday, May 27, held a rally on the University of Wisconsin campus. The next day, approximately 3,000 people, mostly students, marched up State Street to the capitol building. Several Commandos helped break down the doors to the assembly chamber, allowing about 1,000 demonstrators to enter it. After an 11-hour occupation, law enforcement officers removed the protesters around midnight on May 28-29. Governor Warren P. Knowles called in National Guard troops, who guarded the capitol for several days.[51]

Through the middle of the 1970s, Father Groppi continued to lend his voice to human rights causes. He rallied for the rights of Native Americans, supported the efforts of Catholics in Northern Ireland, and walked the picket line with striking Yale University service employees. He became increasingly close to Margaret Rozga, who had joined the open housing campaign while a student at Alverno College. In April 1976, he married Rozga and left the priesthood. He then took some law school courses and entered Virginia Theological Seminary to prepare for ordination as an Episcopal priest. He declined a posting as an Episcopal priest in Detroit and returned to Milwaukee. Once back home, Groppi drove a city bus and in July 1983 was chosen as president of the Milwaukee local of the Amalgamated Transit Union. Groppi had surgery for an aggressive brain tumor in December 1984. The surgery left him wheelchair bound, and he died on November 4, 1985, at the age of 54.[52]

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[50] "Groppi Quitting Not Pressured," *Milwaukee Journal,* Nov. 18, 1968; "Groppi Successor Picked by NAACP Youth Council," *Milwaukee Sentinel,* Feb. 2, 1969; Jones, 216, 240-242.
[51] University of Wisconsin, March on Milwaukee site, http://uwm.edu/marchonmilwaukee/keyterms/welfare-mothers-march/; Jones, 236-239, 247-248;
[52] "James Groppi Dies of Cancer," *Milwaukee Journal,* Nov. 4, 1968; Jones, 97. 242-243.

As the civil rights era passed into history, many Milwaukeeans took a more benign view of Father Groppi. In August 1987, 400 people, some of them veterans of the 1960s open housing campaign marked the 20th anniversary of the campaign. They marched along the same route taken on the first two marches in 1967, across the 16th Street Viaduct and into Kosciuszko Park. The marchers and others wanted the viaduct renamed for Groppi. In November 1987, the Common Council voted by a margin of nine to seven to rename the bridge. Henry Maier was still mayor and vetoed the resolution, accusing Groppi of "spiritual violence." In May 1988, the council passed the resolution again, and a new mayor, John Norquist, signed it. On Sunday, August 21, 1988, approximately 400 people met at the viaduct for a ceremony officially designating the structure the James E. Groppi Unity Bridge. In contrast to the thousands who fought open housing n the 1960s, this time just five or six people showed up to oppose the renaming, some carrying Confederate flags. [53]

Conclusion

The 16th Street Viaduct is eligible for the National Register at the state level of significance, in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/Black and Social History for its association with one of the most influential Civil Rights campaigns in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee open housing campaign of 1967-1968 (period of significance) was the second most significant civil rights campaign in Wisconsin history. Only the long struggle to integrate the public schools can be considered more significant. Father James E. Groppi was the leading figure in the open housing marches and one of the most important civil rights activists in Wisconsin history. The open housing marches raised public awareness of the limited housing options available to Milwaukee's African American community. In addition, they dramatically revealed the depth of bigotry among some white Wisconsin residents. The marches played a role in the passage of an open housing section in the federal Civil Rights Act of 1968 and a strong Milwaukee open housing ordinance later that same year.

The 16th Street Viaduct fully represents the significance of the Milwaukee civil rights movement. The first two open housing marches crossed over the viaduct. These marches met with the most violent resistance of all the marches, and marchers had to run to the safety of the narrow bridge opening where police could more easily protect them. National media covered these early marches and the reaction to them. Several later marches crossed the viaduct, and at least one march by open housing opponents crossed the viaduct in the opposite direction. The viaduct was a powerful physical symbol of the racial divide that existed in the city in the 1960s. Various media outlets repeatedly referred to the river valley that the viaduct spanned as the city's Mason-Dixon Line. In the nineteenth century the Mason-Dixon

[53] "March Over Viaduct Recalls Groppi Era, without Rancor," *Milwaukee Sentinel,* Aug. 24, 1987; "Maier Vetoes Attempt to Honor Groppi," *Milwaukee Sentinel,* Nov. 26, 1987; "Mayor Accuses Groppi of 'Spiritual Violence,'" *Milwaukee Sentinel,* Dec. 5, 1987; "Council Renames Viaduct for Groppi," *Milwaukee Sentinel,* May 27, 1988; "In the Name of Unity: Bridge Dedicated to Groppi," *Milwaukee Journal,* Aug. 22, 1988.

Line separated the free state of Pennsylvania from the slave state of Virginia. When plans for the first march were announced, the *Milwaukee Courier*, an African American newspaper, observed that the participants would be "crossing the Alps" Milwaukee style.[54] The viaduct was that freighted with meaning.

The 16th Street Viaduct conveys the significance of the 1967-1968 events better than any extant city structure. St. Boniface Church, where many of the open housing rallies took place, was razed in 1975.

Preservation Activities

The city of Milwaukee is a Certified Local Government and has a decades old commitment to historic preservation. The City has a local historic preservation ordinance and Commission, historic preservation planning staff, and actively nominates buildings for landmark status.

Acknowledgements

This nomination is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

[54] NAACP Youth Council to March on Southside, *Milwaukee Courier,* Aug. 26, 1967.

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Milwaukee Journal

Milwaukee Sentinel

Milwaukee Star

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End of References

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary embraces the totality of the viaduct from West Courtney Street to West Pierce Street, including concrete piers, steel and concrete bents, concrete deck, bascule, operator's house, and the ramp and abutments extending north from West Pierce Street.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the viaduct structure traversed by civil rights marchers in 1967 and 1968.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Information for all photographs:

Name of Property:	16th Street Viaduct
City or Vicinity:	Milwaukee
County	Milwaukee
State:	Wisconsin
Name of Photographer:	Robert W. Blythe
Date of Photograph:	See below
Location of Original Digital Files:	Wisconsin Historical Society, 816 State St., Madison, WI 53706

1. General view of viaduct, facing west, March 29, 2018
2. Bascule section of viaduct with bridge tender's house, facing west, March 29, 2018
3. Viaduct roadway from Clybourn Street, facing north, January 24, 2018
4. Viaduct roadway from Pierce Street, facing south, January 24, 2018
5. East side of ramp supporting the southernmost portion of viaduct, from Pierce Street, facing northwest, January 24, 2018
6. Section of viaduct spanning Interstate 94, facing southwest, March 29, 2018
7. Underside of viaduct showing steel supporting members. facing south, January 24, 2018
8. Pedestrian stairs at Canal Street, facing northeast, January 24, 2018
9. Bascule operator's house on east side of viaduct, March 29, 2018
10. "James E. Groppi Unity Bridge" sign on west side of viaduct, facing south, March 29, 2018

End of Photo Descriptions

List of Figures

1. Site Plan
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4. Typical Cross Section of Viaduct
5. Railing and Light Standard Details
6. Operator House Floor Plan and End Elevation
7. Viaduct Deck, Looking North (Historic Photograph), Circa 1955
8. Growth of Inner Core, 1940 to 1960, and Sites of Civil Rights Actions
9. Marchers on the Viaduct, 1967
10. Open Housing Marchers with Father Groppi (Historic Photograph), 1967 or 1968
11. Father Groppi and Open Housing Marchers (Historic Photograph), 1967 or 1968

Figure 1, Site Plan

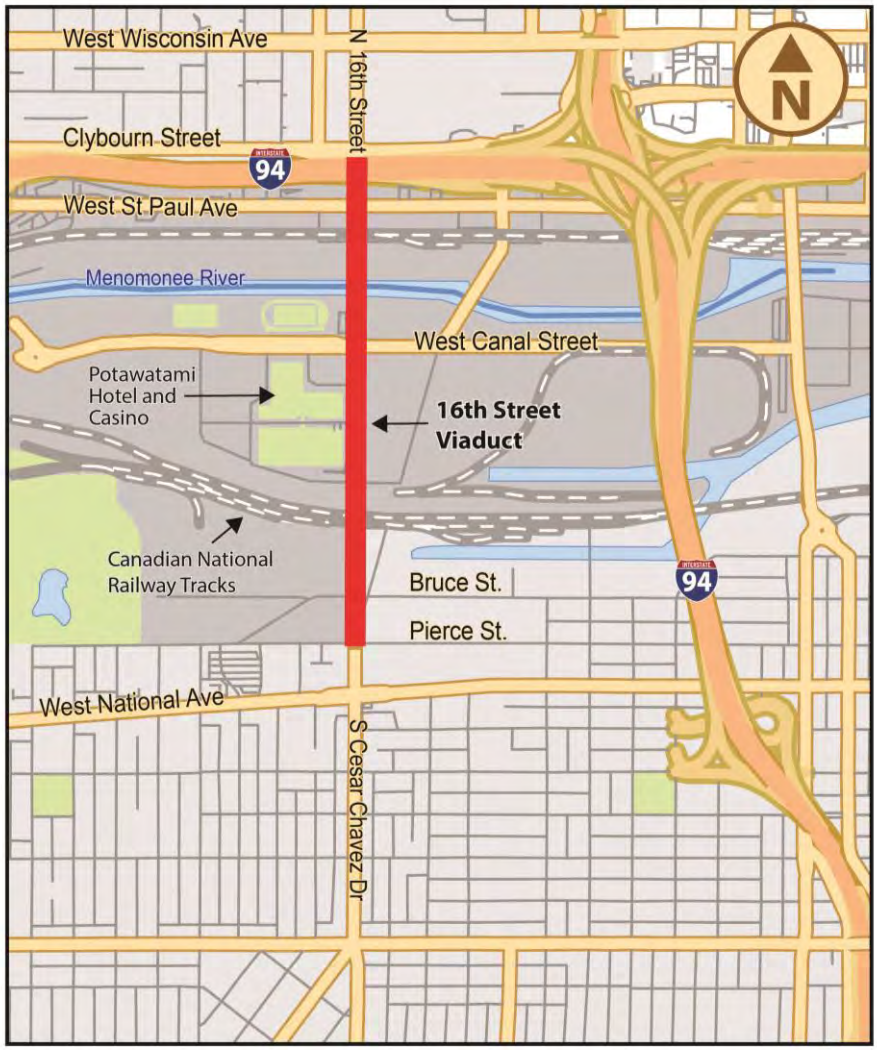

Figure 1: 16th Street Viaduct/Site Plan
Location: 16th Street from Clybourn Street to West Pierce Street
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, WI
Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 1,065 feet

Figure 2, Milwaukee Station Map: Lands, Tracks & Structures, Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, ND, circa 1930s

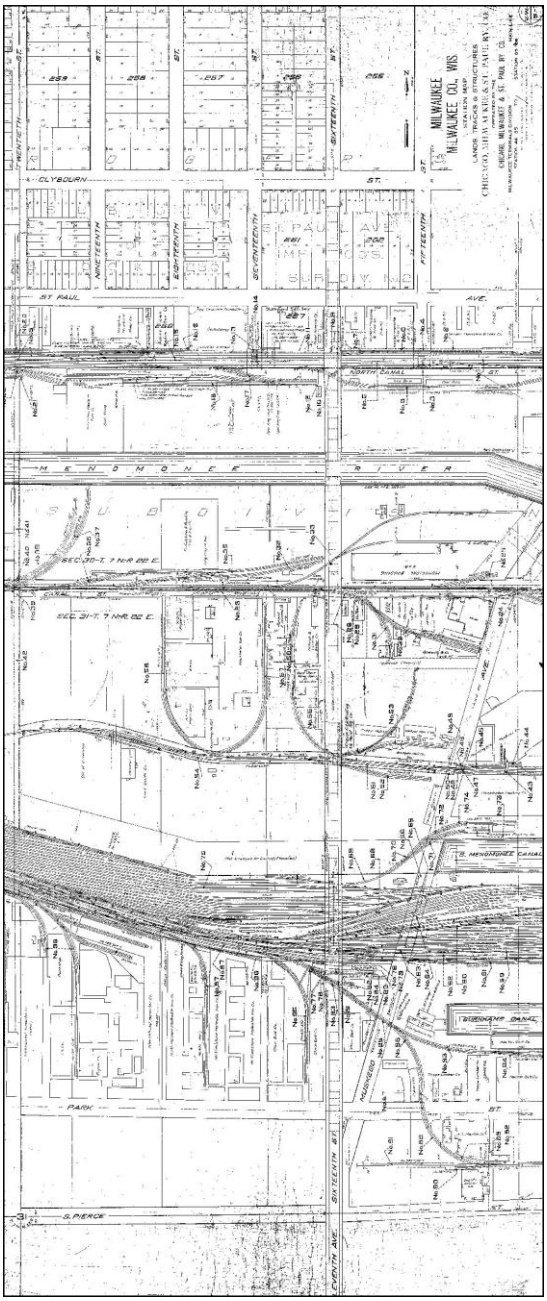

Figure 3, Dedication of the 16th Street Viaduct, *Milwaukee Journal*, October 25, 1929

20 FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1929 THE MILWAUK

Waits a Year to Get Viaduct

City Enjoys New Span From 16th St. to 11th Av.

After more than a year of waiting, Milwaukee again is traversing the Menomonee valley over the Sixteenth st. viaduct.

This time it is a new span connecting Sixteenth st. on the north with Eleventh av. on the south. At the expense of $1,850,000 the new bridge was built to replace the old inadequate structure that had been in use for years.

For 10 years citizens had been agitating for a new viaduct at Sixteenth st. Civic clubs and business men's associations petitioned the common council.

Built in '95

Obviously the old structure was inadequate. It had been built in 1895 and was not designed to carry the heavy modern traffic of trucks and motor cars. It wasn't wide enough.

All the time the proposal was before the council the expense of maintaining the bridge mounted until it became almost prohibitive. Repairs were frequent and expensive.

While the council was considering the new viaduct, plans for the widening of Sixteenth st. and Eleventh av. were discussed. With the two approaching streets wider than the bridge it was realized that traffic would be slower and more hazardous. These facts weighed heavily in the decision to replace the old viaduct.

Authorize Bond Issue

A bond issue of $2,200,000 was authorized by the voters but only $1,850,000 was actually spent on the construction.

Soon after the bonds were authorized and sold the plans were drawn and contracts awarded to the Stein Construction Co., low bidders. Work on razing the old viaduct was begun in May, 1928, and by August the contractors were starting on the new.

The superiority of the new viaduct is apparent. It measures 70 feet in width with two seven-foot sidewalks, leaving a 56-foot roadway. The old was 60 feet wide, with two 10-foot sidewalks and a 40-foot roadway. Only one lane of traffic could be accommodated each way outside of the car tracks. Now two can move freely in each direction.

Concrete slabs averaging 10 inches, topped with three inches of asphaltic concrete, form the floor. In all, 8,500 tons of steel were used. The new bascule is 120 feet as compared with 66 feet on the old.

—Journal Staff Photo

View of New Viaduct

Here is a view of the new Sixteenth st.-Eleventh av. viaduct, which was formally opened Thursday night. The structure has taken more than a year to complete.

Figure 4, Typical Cross Section of Viaduct

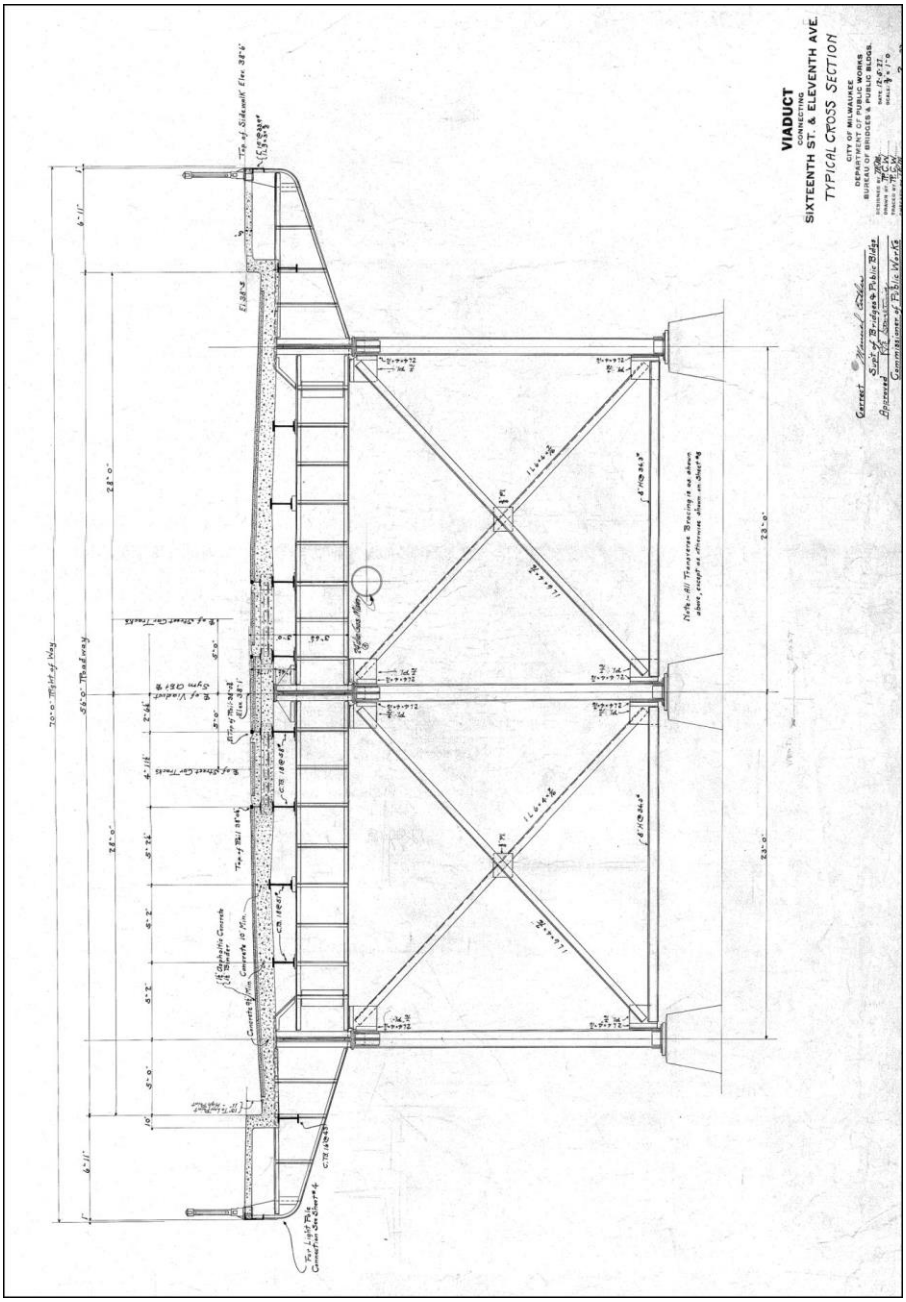

Figure 5, Railing and Light Standard Details

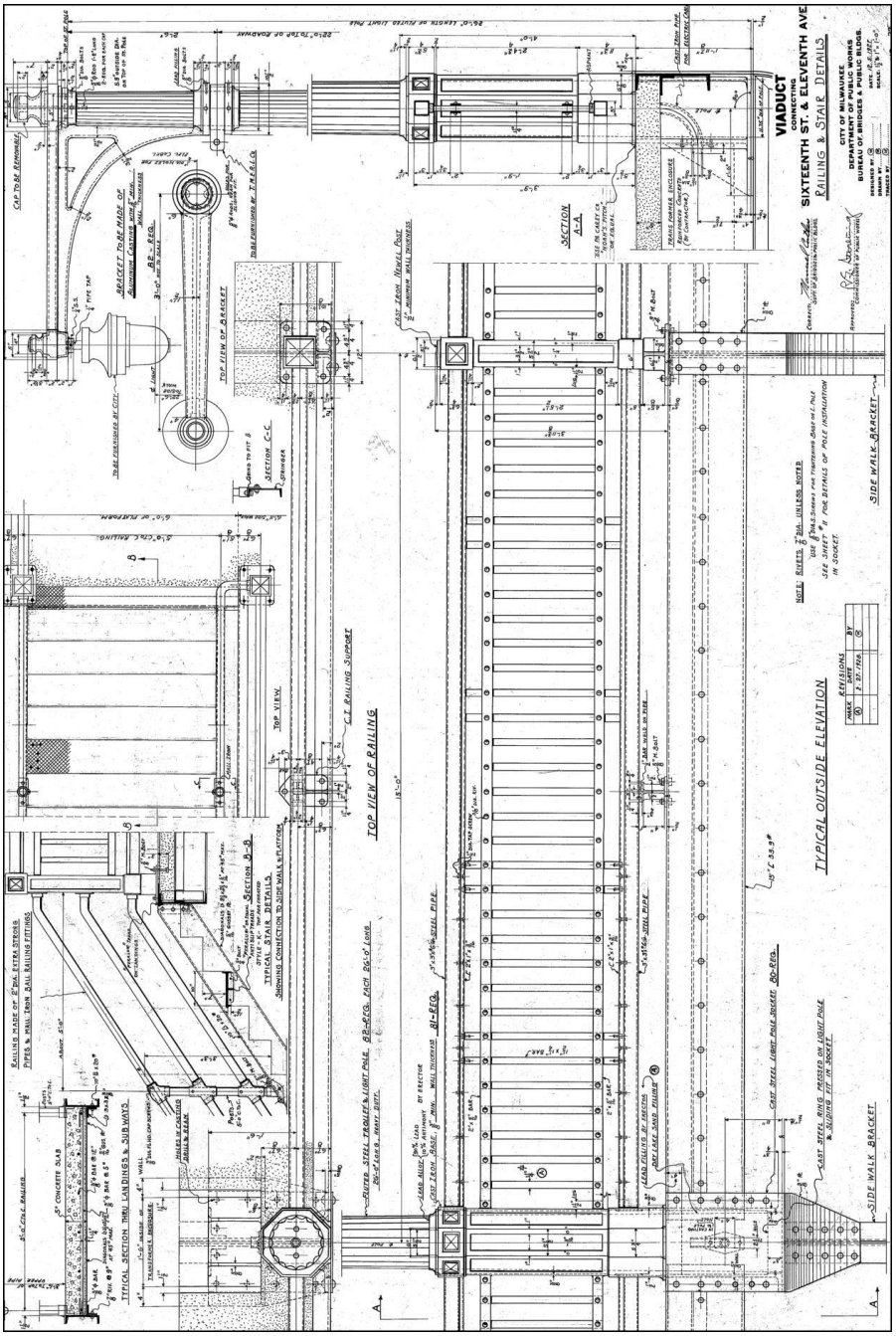

Figure 6, Operator House Floor Plan and End Elevation

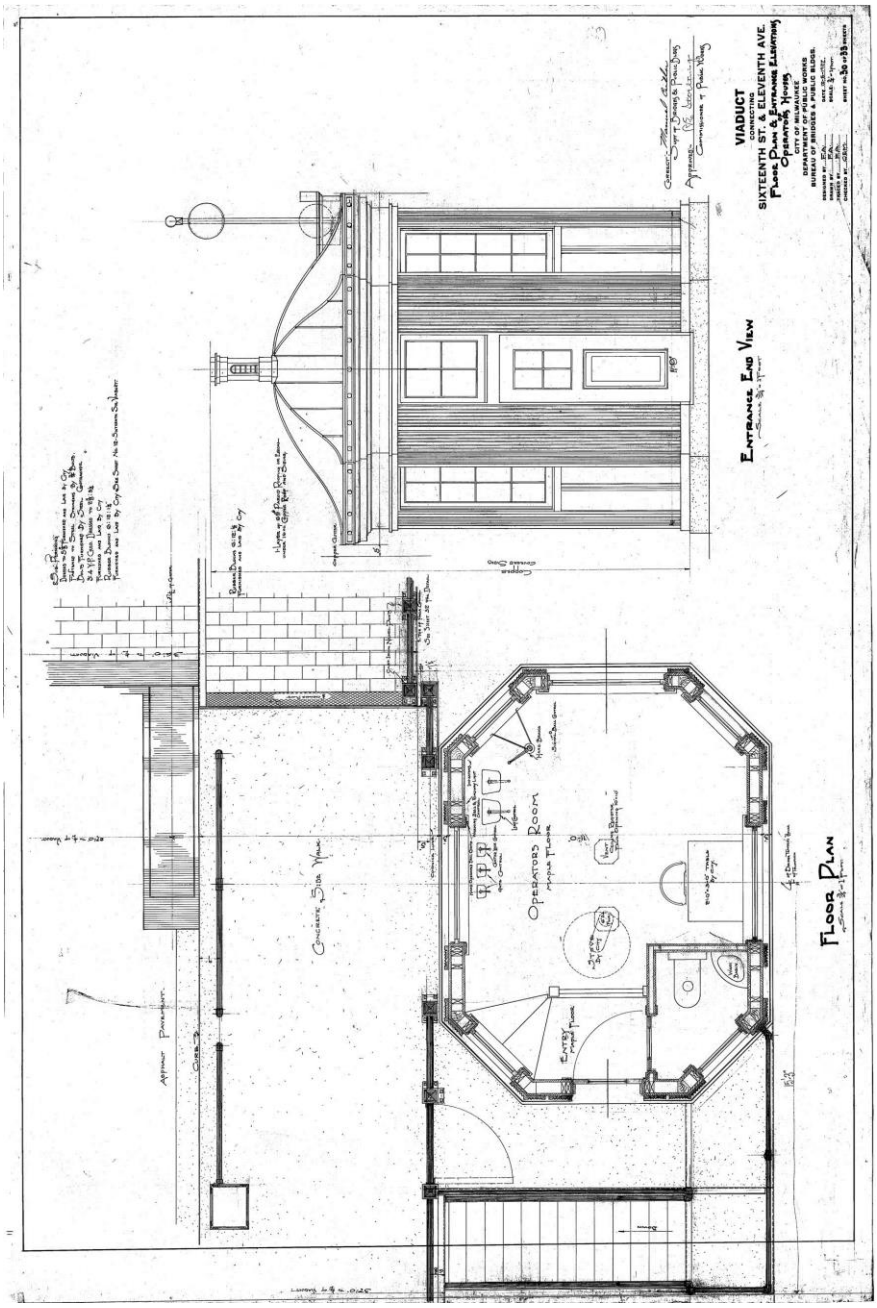

Figure 7, Viaduct Deck, Looking North (Historic Photograph), Circa 1955

Figure 8, Growth of Inner Core, 1940 to 1960, and Sites of Civil Rights Actions

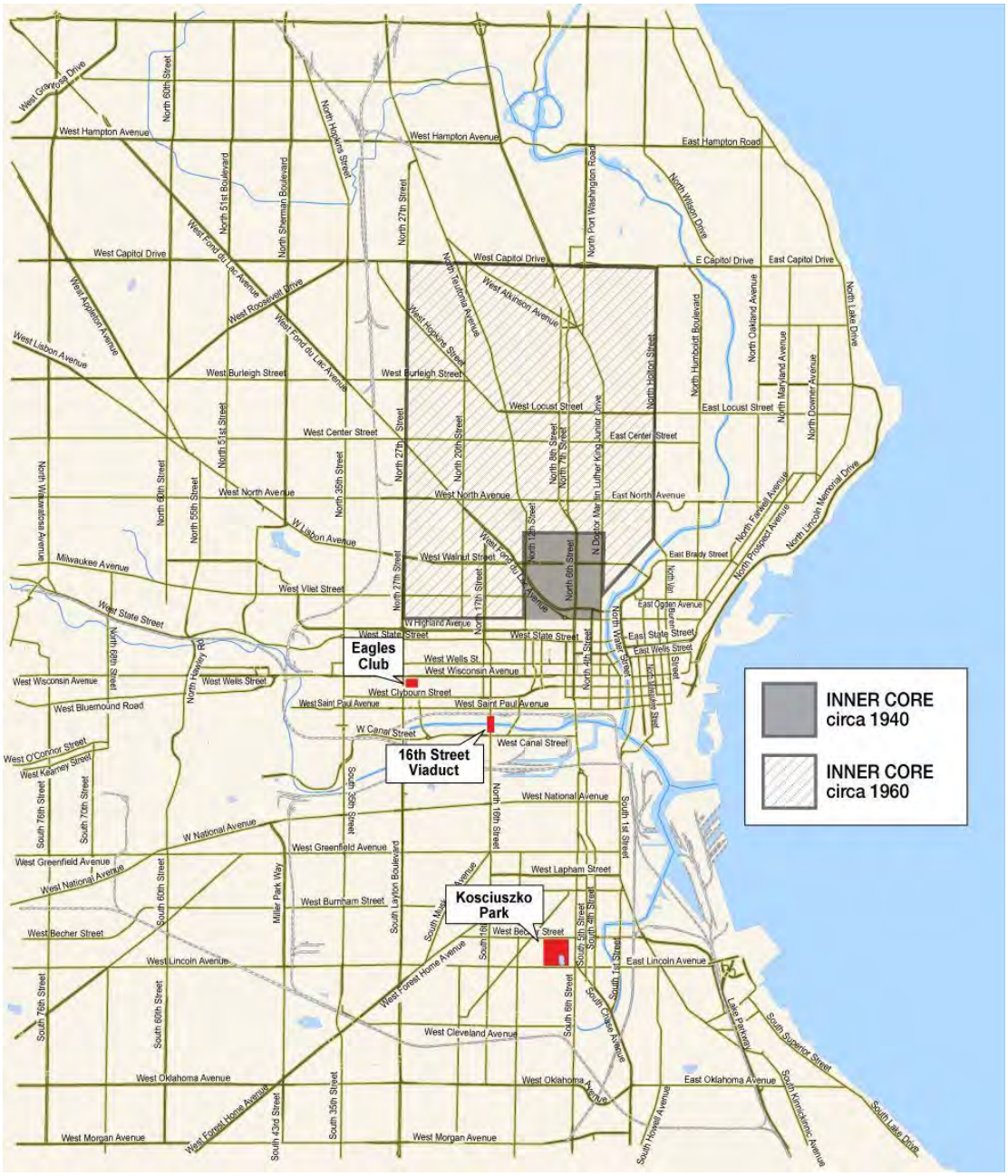

Figure 9, Marchers on the Viaduct, 1967

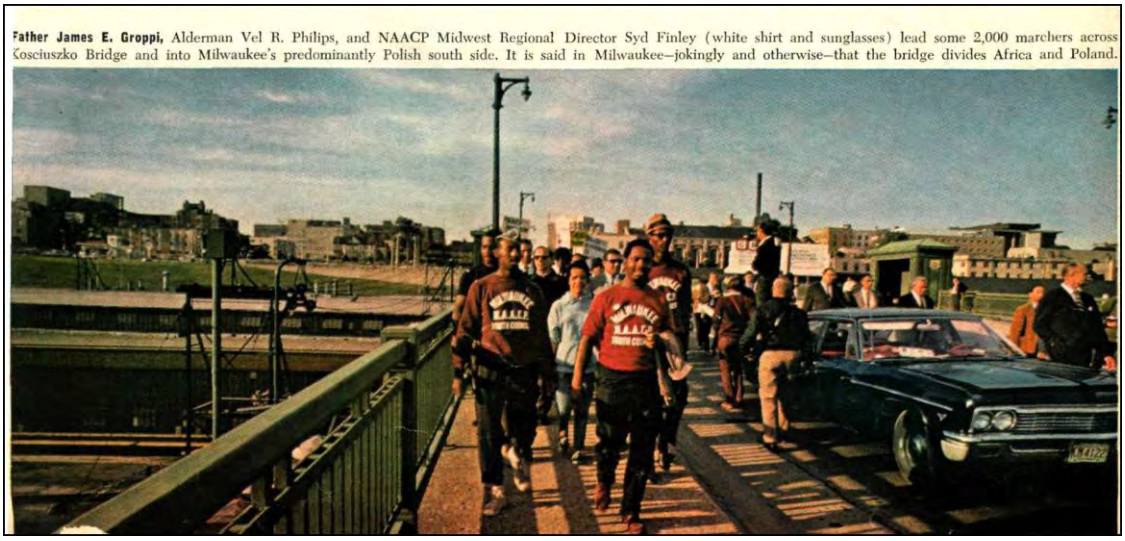

Figure 10, Open Housing Marchers with Father Groppi (Historic Photograph), 1967 or 1968

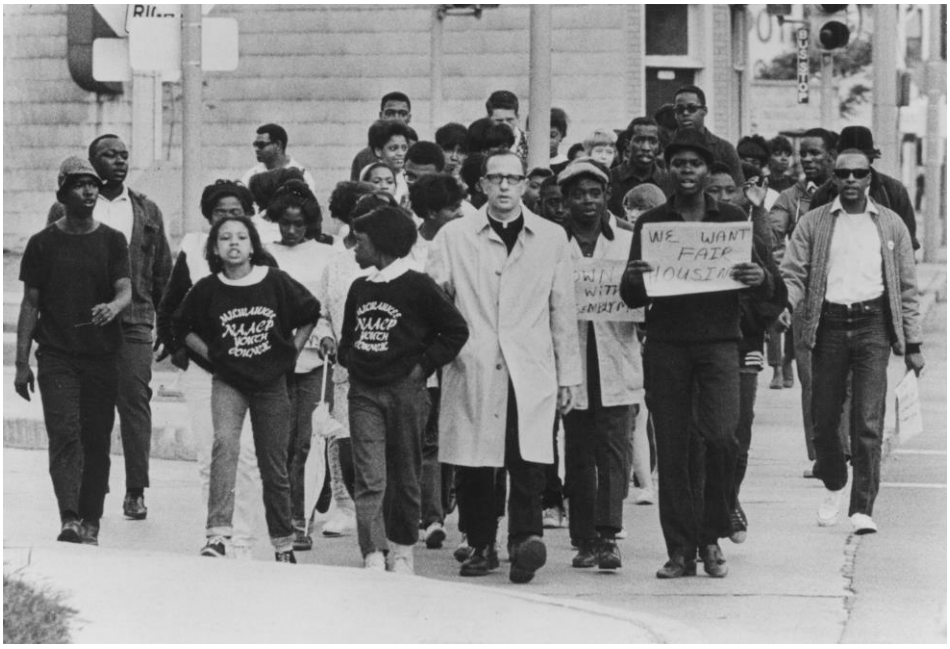

Figure 11, Father Groppi and Open Housing Marchers (Historic Photograph), 1967 or 1968

Milwaukee

Map ID: 18-0112-7519-01R

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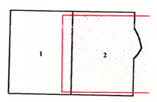
A TRIMBLE COMPANY

Vicinity Map
Wisconsin

Source Map Information

Index of original USGS topographic map sheets. Source date, contour interval, and map symbology may vary by source map. Please refer to the index the published date of the original map.



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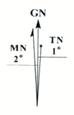
2	1971	Milwaukee (10 FT)



Magnetic declination of 2W at center of map on January 12, 2018

1:24000 Scale

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Projection Zone16
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)

18-0112-7519-01R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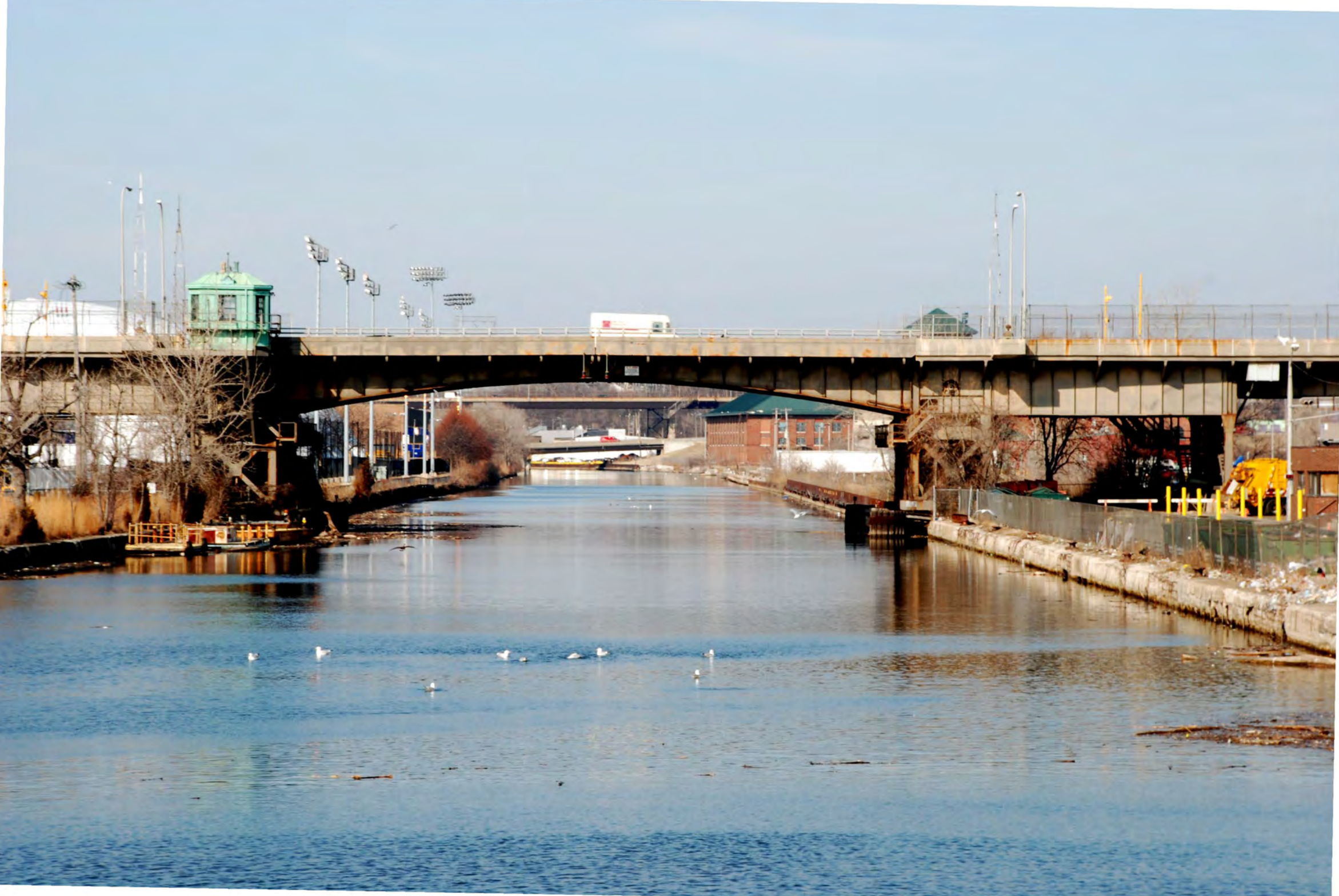


N 16th St


N 16th St


CAUTION
HARD HAT
AND FOOT
PROTECTION
REQUIRED


City of Milwaukee
JAMES
E
GROPPI
Unity
Bridge

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	16th Street Viaduct
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	WISCONSIN, Milwaukee

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
3/25/2019	4/22/2019	5/7/2019	5/9/2019	5/15/2019

Reference number:	SG100003908
Nominator:	Other Agency, SHPO

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	**X** Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	X CLG	

X Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **5/7/2019** Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	
Recommendation/ Criteria	

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

City of Milwaukee

Office of the City Clerk

Jim Owczarski
City Clerk
jowcza@milwaukee.gov

Richard G. Pfaff
Deputy City Clerk
rpfaff@milwaukee.gov

August 6, 2018

Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator
Wisconsin Historical Society
Division of Historic Preservation and Public History
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706

Dear Ms. Veregin

RE: CLG Review of the National Register Nomination for the 16th Street Viaduct / James E. Groppi Unity Bridge / State Inventory B-40-550-86

In accordance with the provisions of the Certified Local Government Agreement between the City of Milwaukee and Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office, the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the National Register nomination of the 16th Street Viaduct. The Commission determined that the property met the Statement of Significance as outlined in the application and voted to support the nomination on August 6, 2018.

The Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission feels proud that this important symbol of Milwaukee's Civil Rights movement is being recognized by the National Park Service. Time has not diminished the accomplishments made by the many, many persons who took an activist stance to make Milwaukee's housing open to all of its residents. Father Groppi's leadership skills, commitment and persona helped bring the issue to the forefront of public attention not only in Milwaukee but in other cities. Segregation and racism are still with us today but the 16th Street Viaduct stands for what can be accomplished with organization, tenacity and the will to make positive peaceful change.

If you need additional information or have any questions please feel free to contact the Historic Preservation Commission staff at (414) 286-5722.

Sincerely,

VICE CHAIR

Alderman Robert Bauman, Chair
Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission

C: Jim Owczarski

EVAN
GOYKE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
18th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

January 17, 2019

Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board
c/o Peggy Veregin
Wisconsin Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Dear Members of the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board:

I am writing to express my support for the nomination of the 16th Street Viaduct at North 16th Street from West Clybourn Street to West Pierce Street in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin to be placed on the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. I understand this structure is being considered at your February 15, 2019 meeting.

I currently live in the Historic Concordia Neighborhood and own a historically-designated home. I understand the importance of such a designation and the value it brings to a community and specific properties. Our rich history is a major draw for home owners and visitors. As a fellow community member, historic property owner, and elected representative, I am respectfully requesting the Board's approval of this nomination.

As a resident I use the 16th Street Viaduct all the time. Its history includes transformational events with Father Groppi and Milwaukee's Civil Rights efforts. The Wisconsin Historical Society has given me a photo of Father Groppi that hangs in my Capitol Office today. I believe the 16th Street Viaduct in Milwaukee, Wisconsin is worthy of being designated as a part of the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

State Representative Evan Goyke
18th Assembly District

State Capitol: P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708 • (608) 266-0645 • Toll-free: (888) 534-0018
E-mail: rep.goyke@legis.wi.gov • Web: http://goyke.assembly.wi.gov

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Twenty-second day of March 2019, for the nomination of the 16th Street Viaduct to the National Register of Historic Places:

1	Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
1	CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
	Multiple Property Nomination form
10	Photograph(s)
1	CD with image files
1	Map(s)
11	Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
2	Piece(s) of correspondence
	Other:

COMMENTS:

	Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
	The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
	Other: